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COHERENCE AND COHESION IN AN EFL ESSAY OF A GRADUATE STUDENT

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ABSTRACT

This descriptive research is about EFL writing. Its objectives are to find out how coherence and cohesion is constructed in EFL writing. Its research subject was Doa, a masters student of the Graduate English Department of Nusa Cendana University. To get the data, Doa wrote an essay in his classroom for an hour on February 4, 2017. The topic is why he wants to study at the university. He was allowed to write on his computer, use dictionaries, and discuss it with his friends doing the same task. His essay has 388 words, 11 sentences, and five paragraphs. The data were analysed based on Taylor and Taylor's theory (1989) on coherence and Halliday and Hasan's theory (1976) on cohesion. It is found that despite some problems related to his word choice and sentence structure, Doa could construct local coherence in his essay. Yet he failed to build up global coherence as two paragraphs of his essay are irrelevant. The essay is cohesive as some references, ellipsis, substitutions, and conjunctions are well-used. It is concluded that the writer was potentially competent to write coherent and cohesive EFL essays, yet he needs to improve his ability to construct better organization, word choice and sentence structures.

Keywords: coherence, cohesion, EFL writing, and graduate students.

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INTRODUCTION

Studies on English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) writing, particularly on coherence and cohesion as well as cognitive processes have been intensive in the last few decades (see, for example, Wallace & Hayes, 1991; Kuo, 1995; Safnil, 1998; Tans, 1999/2007/2008a; Spandel, 2004; Holme, 2012; Sadi & Othman, 2012; Abas & Aziz, 2016; Sevgi, 2016). Yet there has not been any study on coherence and cohesion in EFL essays of graduate students, particularly those studying in Indonesia. It is, therefore, interesting to know how graduate EFL students in that sense construct coherence and cohesion in their EFL essays. In other words, this article is to answer the question of how a graduate EFL student of an Indonesian academic background constructs coherence and cohesion in his EFL writing.

Answering the question is crucial for several reasons. First, for Indonesian students, studying at tertiary level, including to do their masters degree, is getting more popular. Indonesia, of course, has to make

sure that its education quality is good enough, if it is not excellent, so that his students' interest to study at that level may not weaken in the future. As a part of that effort, it is important for Indonesian tertiary institutions to know how its students perform when they study at that level. This study has been designed in that line of thought, that is, to know how Indonesian students perform and what could be done to better their educational achievement. Although this study simply focuses on one single student and single topic, that is, coherence and cohesion in EFL writing, it is still crucial as it will help Indonesian tertiary institutions, directly or indirectly, to have better insights into their students so that they can treat them in such a way that the students will succeed in their studying in Indonesia and later in working in the country or elsewhere.

Secondly, the subject of this study is an English lecturer. As an EFL lecturer, the research subject, like any lecturer anywhere in the world, is supposed to master the nature of coherence and cohesion in EFL writing in such a way that his EFL can be made better, that is, he is able to construct his EFL writing and/or speaking coherently and cohesively. With a much better English, he can then use it more effectively as a means of learning, communicating, and, in the context of the research subject, of using English as a means of teaching/instruction later in Indonesia when he finishes his masters study. It is, therefore, important for the research subject, and for any EFL lecturer in this case, to be coherent and cohesive in his EFL writing and/or speaking to be more effective as a teacher/lecturer.

Thirdly, in relation to the previous reason, with his improved competence, the research subject can then be able to help his students more effectively later based on his understanding of his own competence in constructing coherent and cohesive speech/essays. His good ability as such will, in turn, make him more effective not only in communicating but also in creating good understanding among Indonesia people that, in turn, could create a better life for every body in the country by effectively using it as means of learning, interaction and transaction (see, for example, Yule, 1990: 5-6), some language functions which are indeed crucial for plural/multilingual countries like Indonesia.

Fourthly, such a good command in writing and speaking will help EFL learners to be better in learning and/or mastering any knowledge, skills, and values both in schools and beyond needed to succeed in life. In other words, a good command of English will help students to be good at mastering other lessons they learn in schools like mathematics, physics, chemistry, and many others since the subjects are usually written in English. Understanding English will, therefore, help them to be more knowledgeable in those subjects as well. This, in turn, will make them more independent in fulfilling their living needs.

Fifthly, despite the fact that results of this study cannot be generalized due to its nature as a descriptive study, it is believed that some insights obtained from this study can inspire others, particularly those use English as a foreign language. For them, this is crucial as it will help them to better understand the complexity of learning and using a foreign language and, therefore, act accordingly, that is, learning harder to improve their mastery of English in all aspects of it. This, in turn, help them to be able to use it more effectively in their life.

Finally, since one's mastery of a language has a positive effect to his/her mastery of another language due to interlanguage dependence (see, for example, Cummins, 1979/1991), it is believed that one's good mastery of English coherence and cohesion will indeed help him/her to master coherence and cohesion in other languages like Indonesian. This is also true for other language skills such as reading and listening as well as other language aspects like grammar/structure, mechanics, and organization of ideas. That is, when one is good at using those language skills and aspects in one language, he/she can then use them well in other languages or vice versa (see, for example, Tans, 2008b).

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is indeed included in discursive practices of writing/producing argumentative essays, both oral and written. Yet, for this study, the writer focuses simply on written argumentative discourse in which what is analyzed is a graduate student's coherence and cohesion in his EFL essay. Its framework is, therefore, related to coherence and cohesion in English argumentative written discourse as discussed below.

## 1. Coherence

Coherence basically means intelligibility and/or consistency. In that sense, a speech and/or a piece of writing is coherent and, therefore, it has coherence, if it is intelligible and consistent (see, for example, Yule, 1990: 105-106). If it is not intelligible and not consistent, the speech and/or writing is not coherent. It has, therefore, no coherence. This is understandable in such a context in which a person, for example, describes his/her father as a good person, the whole content of the description must, therefore, be about his/her father as a good person. When he/she describes his/her father as a bad person in the same description, such a description is not intelligible and not consistent and, therefore, not coherent.

To make it coherent it is necessary that the speaker or the writer keeps his/her thesis statement in his/her speech/writing, that is, his/her father is a good person. Any piece of information saying that his/her father is a bad man has to be deleted as it is irrelevant. In addition, the speaker or the writer may change his/her thesis statement from stating that his/her father is a good person to a thesis statement saying that his/her father is both good and bad. By doing that, he/she can then include any piece of information in which his/her father is not only a good person but also a bad man. In that sense, his/her description of his/her father is coherent. In this sense, Kuo (1995: 48) argues that coherence is a "kind of relationships, among elements of a text, which are not based on surface links, but links derived from thematic development, organization of information, or communicative purpose of the particular discourse."

Indeed "such links from thematic development" form, explicitly or implicitly, contents, messages, topics and focusses of a text. The contents, messages, topics and focusses are expressed by a speaker/writer using such elements as words, sentences, and paragraphs organized in such a way that they are logically tied to one another. This is in line with a dictionary definition of coherence, that is, a condition of a speech or text whose content is connected or "hanging together, as distinct from that of random assemblages of sentences. Especially in studies of conversation: e.g. it is by a principle of coherence that, if one speaker asks a question, the other is expected to answer" (Matthews, 2007: 62).

Taylor and Taylor (1995: 48) add that each segment of a discourse (conversation) consists of two levels of coherence, that is, local coherence and global coherence. The first is textual coherence at word, sentence, and paragraph levels. Local coherence is a condition in which each utterance is channeled "to another utterance that occurred further back in the segment (or session)" (p. 48). Hence, an utterance is defined as a "spoken sentence, clause, sentence fragment, phrase, or word" (p. 47). The latter is coherence at discourse/textual level, namely, connection from development of a theme/topic from the first word to the last one in a conversation. So, global coherence, they say, means that "all utterances are unified around one discourse topic" (p.48).

These notions of global and local coherences are also applied in a written discourse. That is, a piece of writing is globally coherent when all of the words, sentences, and paragraphs used to build it up are related to a topic or topics indicated by a writer in his/her writing. In other words, the relationship among the words/sentences/paragraphs indicates that they function to express a topic and its focusses or some related topics and their focusses as the content(s) of a written discourse (see, for example, Cox & Giddens, 1991; Dunbar et al., 1991; Blanchard & Root, 2004; Tans, 2014).

To have a coherent relationship as such, a written discourse, Blanchard and Root argue, should have a topic or a subject coexisting with its purpose(s) and audience. In other words, to have a good piece of writing, writers should, among other things, well consider their topic/subject, purpose(s) and audience before and/or while writing. To make their writing coherent, writers should organize their writing content in a good organization of ideas, that is, introduction, thesis development, and conclusion. In introduction, it is important to have a piece of "background information" in order to get "reader's attention using one or more of the following: anecdotes, quotations, questions, facts and statistics" leading to a "thesis statement" in which "the subject and focus of the essay" are stated. In thesis development, the main ideas stated as focuses of a written discourse are developed further by giving examples, details, facts, and statistics. In conclusion, some techniques are employed by making some "final comments" in which such techniques as "restating main

points, asking a question, suggesting a solution, making a recommendation and prediction” are used (2004: 4-5).

## 2. Cohesion

Since coherence is related to a united topic/theme/message of a discourse, in a written discourse, cohesion is a textual condition in which each single word/phrase that forms a sentence, each single clause/sentence that forms a paragraph, and each single paragraph that forms a complete discourse (i.e. it has its introduction, thesis development, and conclusion), are all tied well by some words in such a way that the sentence(s), paragraphs, and the discourse as a whole are logical and, therefore, meaningful. It is also the case for a conversation as in the following modified example by Matthews (2007: 62-63):

A: Peter came.

B: But he was very late.

According to Matthews, the conversation between A and B above is cohesive because of the use of two cohesive aspects, that is, “*but* as a conjunction and the link between the pronoun *he* and its antecedent *Peter*” since cohesion is a link “between successive sentences in texts, conversations, etc., in so far as it can be described in terms of specific syntactic units”(2007: 63).

In that sense, cohesion is related to the presence of a language device or devices in a discourse whose function is to cohesively tie certain words into certain phrases into certain sentences into certain paragraphs into a discourse that are grammatically connected. This is supported by Halliday and Hasan (1976: 5) who say that, “Cohesion is part of the system of a language. The potential for cohesion lies in the systematic resources of reference, ellipsis and so on that are built into the language itself.” In other words, Kuo says, cohesion is the same as “the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text”(1995: 48). In this context, Yule (1990: 105) adds, cohesion is often described as “the ties and connections which exist within texts.”

In an oral or written text, such relationships are constructed by using such elements as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunctions within certain structure so that they are called grammatical cohesion. Halliday & Hasan (1976: 31-274) describe them further below:

- 1) Reference divided into two categories, that is, exophoric reference, which is situational, and endophoric reference, which is textual, consisting of endophoric reference that has two sub-division, namely, anaphora (a reference that precedes a text), and cataphora (a reference that follows a text);
- 2) There are three kinds of reference, that is, personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference;
- 3) Substitution in which an item is replaced by another item in a text consists of nominal replacement (i.e. *one, ones, same*), verbal replacement (*do*), and clausal replacement (i.e. *so, not*);
- 4) Ellipsis as omitting an item in a text consists of ellipsis of noun, verbs, clauses; and,
- 5) Conjunction that has four types, namely, adding (e.g. *and*), opposition (e.g. *yet*), causal expression (e.g. *so*) and timing (e.g. *then*).

These textual elements will be analyzed within the context of a text or an essay produced by the research subject of this study, that is, Doa, a nickname. The objectives of the analysis are described below.

### OBJECTIVES

This study has two objectives, that is, to find out how coherence and cohesion is constructed in a graduate student’s EFL essay. The data collected from a graduate student’s essay will be analyzed in order to know how the research subject constructed coherence and cohesion in his essay. To do so, Taylor and Taylor’s theory (1989) on coherence and Halliday and Hasan’s theory (1976) on cohesion will be the bases for the researchers’ data analysis as stated in the following session of methodology.

### METHODOLOGY

This research is a descriptive study, that is, to have a “description of natural or man-made phenomena” (Bjorg and Gall, 1989: 5) or a “detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or particular event” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007: 271) which is an EFL text by a graduate (masters)

student within the context of this research. What is to be analysed in this study is how coherence and cohesion is constructed in a graduate student's EFL writing whose topic is reasons why he wants to study at the Graduate English Education Department, Nusa Cendana University, Kupang, Indonesia. So, the instrument used to get the data was a "writing test" on the topic.

The EFL graduate student, Doa, a nickname, who was randomly selected for this study is one of the graduate students doing their masters studies at the university when the data for this study was collected, that is, 4 February, 2014. The research subject is an English lecturer like his graduate students who are mostly English lecturers/teachers. As masters students, they had got their undergraduate degree in English education from various universities in Indonesia. When joining this research, they were in the second semester and had joined such courses as Advanced Academic Writing, Discourse and Language Teaching, and Bilingualism and Education.

To get his data, the researcher asked Doa and his friends to write their essays on the topic stated above. They wrote directly in their computers in their class for an hour. In writing their essays, they were allowed to open up their dictionaries and discuss their writing with their friends. Yet, it was observed that they did not open up any dictionary, nor discuss their writing with their peers and their lecturer.

After writing their essays on the topic, the researcher copied the students' essay into his computer, yet he just took Doa's essay as his data for this study since Doa had been randomly chosen to be his research subject as a case study. It turns out that Doa's essay consists of five paragraphs, 11 sentences, and 388 words. The data were analysed using Taylor and Taylor's coherence theory (1990), that is, local coherence at paragraph levels (including words/phrases and sentences as parts of a paragraph) and global coherence at discourse (text) level. Cohesion is analysed using Halliday and Hassan's grammatical cohesion theory (1976), that is, reference, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions. For analysis purposes, the following abbreviations are used, that is, *P* for *paragraph*, *S* for *sentence* and *L* for *line*.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study are divided into two major parts which are related to its objectives, namely, coherence construction and cohesion construction. The first is divided into two major parts, that is, local coherence and global coherence. The latter is classified into reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction.

### **Coherence**

Coherence is analysed here in two major parts, that is, local coherence and global coherence. The first focuses on paragraph level coherence which is based upon coherence among word/phrase relations and among sentence relations. The latter is viewed in terms of coherence among paragraphs. Both are presented below.

#### **1. Coherence at Paragraph Level**

In order to make it more systematic, that research results are presented per paragraph. The first is Paragraph one (P1). It is a descriptive paragraph in which Doa describes the University of Nusa Cendana where he is doing his masters study. The paragraph which has five sentences and 118 words is as follows:

The University of Nusa Cendana (Indonesian: Universitas Nusa Cendana) is a public university in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. It was established on September 1, 1962. Its rector is Prof. Ir. Fredrik L. Benu, M.Si., Ph.D. And one of this university has Founded in 1962, Universitas Nusa Cendana (Nusa Cendana University) is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the the urban setting of the small city of Kupang (population range of 250,000-499,999 inhabitants), East Nusa Tenggara. Officially accredited/recognized by the Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia), Universitas Nusa Cendana (UNDANA) is a large (enrollment range: 15,000-19,999 students) coeducational higher education institution.

The contents of those words are generally coherent as in, "The University of Nusa Cendana," (S1/L1), "a public university in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia," (S1/Ls1-2), and "on September 1, 1962" (S3/L2). However, there are three cases in which its lexical coherence seems to be poor. In other words, these three phrases are incoherent, that is: 1) "And one of this university" (S3/L3); 2) "in the the urban setting"

(S3/Ls4-5); and, 3) “coeducational higher education institution” (S4/L7). The first is not coherent because it is not common to use such phrase in English; what is common is “And one of these universities” or just “this university.” When it is related to the previous parts of P1, a coherent use of the phrase should be “This university.” In the second, the use of *the* twice makes it incoherent. The researcher assumes that this is a typing mistake, yet it still has made the phrase incoherent. One article *the* is, therefore, sufficient in that context to make the phrase coherent. In the third, the use of the word *coeducational* is not relevant, so it should be deleted in order to make the phrase coherent.

Despite those three incoherent phrases, the contents or meanings of the five sentences are all coherent as they have good topics (subjects), focuses (predicates etc.), and forms as in, “The University of Nusa Cendana (Indonesian: Universitas Nusa Cendana) is a public university in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia” (S1/Ls1-2), “It was established on September 1, 1962” (S2/L2), and “ Its rector is Prof. Ir. Fredrik L. Benu, M.Si., Ph.D.” (S3/Ls 2-3). In these sentences, Doa seems to have successfully used certain language forms which are motivated by what he means in P1. This supports Holme’s (2012: 6) functional assumption that “form is motivated by meaning.”

Since all five sentences of P1 are all coherent, it is, therefore, logical to say that P1 is coherent. It is indeed coherent because its major idea, that is, describing the University of Nusa Cendana, is elaborated by using such supporting ideas as the time it was founded, its rector, its status as a “non-profit” institution, its student body, and accreditation status. It is found that the paragraph is in line with the nature of a descriptive paragraph, that is, “informative or evocative depending on” a writer’s aim (Dunbar et al., 1991: 86). In other words, that the meanings of all five sentences “hang together” to form that piece of a descriptive paragraph makes P1 coherent. In that sense, it is locally coherent since five sentences are all relevant in describing the University of Nusa Cendana as the main topic of P1.

The second is Paragraph 2 (P2) below. It is an argumentative paragraph and consists of one single sentence and 54 words.

The main reason that I want to study at *UNDANA* University cause, *UNDANA* also provides several academic and non-academic facilities and services to students including a library, housing, sport facilities and/or activities, financial aids and/or scholarships, study abroad and exchange programs, online courses and distance learning opportunities, as well as administrative services.

The words/phrases used by Doa in P2 are in general coherent as in, “The main reason,” (S1/L1), “want to study at,” (S1/L1), and “including a library, housing, sport facilities and/or activities, financial aids and/or scholarships,” (S1/Ls2-3). However, there are some cases in which Doa uses some words/phrases incoherently as in, “*UNDANA* University” (S1/L1), *cause* (S1/L1) and *also* (S1/L1). The phrase “*UNDANA* University” is incoherent because the university Doa is studying at is *Universitas Nusa Cendana* (English: Nusa Cendana University) whose abbreviation is *Undana*. So, using the term *UNDANA University* is incorrect and what is correct is *Undana* or *Nusa Cendana University*. The word *cause* creates incoherence because what should be used there instead is *because* (a conjunction) and definitely not *cause* (a noun/verb), or copula *be* (*is*) based on the topic of the sentence, that is, *the main reason* (S1/L1) Ado studies at *Undana*. The word *also* is incoherent in the context because the word should mean an addition to a reason previously stated in a text. Yet, Ado, in that context, has never stated any reason before that sentence. This is why the word *also* is incoherent.

Despite those incoherent word/phrases, the meaning of the sentence is generally coherent because the sentence is about just one single topic/subject, that is, *the main reason* (S1/L1) for choosing *Undana* to do his masters degree. Although that single topic is without a predicate that should link it to its focus, that is, “*UNDANA* also provides several academic and non-academic facilities ...” (S1/Ls1-2), the whole meaning of the sentence is still coherent as what is supposed to be stated in his argument is a reason why Doa wants to study at *Undana*. However, the sentence can be made more coherent by changing it into a better construction like, “The main reason (that) I want to study at *UNDANA* is because *UNDANA* provides several academic and non-

academic facilities ...” or “I want to study at *UNDANA* because *UNDANA* provides several academic and non-academic facilities ... .”

Since P2 simply consists of a single sentence and the sentence is coherent, P2 must, therefore, be coherent as well. Yet, as stated above, it needs to be revised as done above. Paragraph 3 (P3), below, consists of 129 words and 3 sentences.

I want to take my master degree in English Education Program at *UNDANA* University, and also I look for my career of life. So hopefully of my personality dreams while I finish /graduated from *UNDANA*, I will provide my whole skill and experience in my sweet country for developing the community and society in higher educational science area, some other dream of this I will try to get more an opportunity to apply for international scholarship program in Doctoral degree. *UNDANA* also has a high quality of the lecture, while I was took my time to study, then I am really appreciate for my whole Lectures who taught me during process of time, I hope that through all subject where delivered I could kept some important science in brain.

Like P1 and P2, the contents of the words/phrases in P3 are generally coherent as in, “in English Education Program,” (S1/L1), “from *UNDANA*,” (S2/Ls2-3), and “my whole skill and experience in my sweet country” (S2/L3). However, there are some cases in which lexical coherence seems to be weak, namely: 1) “my master degree” (S1/L1); 2) “*UNDANA* University” (S1/L1); 3) “while” (S2/L2); 4) “some other dream of this” (S2/L4); 5) “to get more an opportunity” (S2/L5); 6) “a high quality of the lecture” (S3/L6); 7) “for my whole Lectures”(S3/L7); 8) “during process of time” (S3/L7); and, 9) “through all subject” (S3/L7). To make the words/phrases coherent or, in general terms, more meaningful and/or understandable in their contexts of usage (see, for example, Holme, 2012), they should be changed into the following forms: 1) *my masters degree*; 2) *UNDANA or Nusa Cendana University* ; 3) *when*; 4) *another dream*; 5) *to get more opportunities*; 6) *a high quality of the lecturers*; 7) *all my lecturers*; 8) *during/along this time*; and, 9) *through all subjects*.

The three sentences found in P3 are not generally coherent. Yet, some clauses are coherent as they have good topics (subjects) and focuses (predicates etc.) as in, “The University of *Nusa Cendana* (Indonesian: *Universitas Nusa Cendana*) is a public university in Kupang, East *Nusa Tenggara*, Indonesia” (S1/Ls1-2), “It was established on September 1, 1962” (S2/L2), and “ Its rector is Prof. Ir. Fredrik L. Benu, M.Si., Ph.D.” (S3/Ls2-3).

Some clauses, however, are not coherent as their meanings are pretty ambiguous as in: 1) “... while I finish /graduated from *UNDANA*” (S2/L2); 2) “... some other dream of this” (S3/L3); 3) “... while I was took my time to study, then I am really appreciate ...” (S3/L5); 4) “... all subject where delivered...” (S3/L6); and, 5) “... I could kept some important science in brain” (S3/L6). To avoid such an ambiguity, the clauses should be modified as follows (in their complete sentence contexts):

1. So, hopefully, of my personality dreams when I finish/graduate from *UNDANA*, I will provide my whole skill and experience in my sweet country for developing the community and society in higher educational science area;
2. Another dream of mine is that I will try to get an opportunity to apply for international scholarship program for my doctoral degree; and,
3. *UNDANA* also has a high quality of lecturers when I take my time to study there;
4. I then really appreciate all my lecturers who have taught me during this time and I hope that through all subjects which are delivered I could keep some important knowledge in my brain.

Despite its clause/sentence incoherences, this paragraph is generally coherent as it provides certain reasons in the paragraph why Doa wants to do his masters study at the University of *Nusa Cendana*, i.e., looking for a (better) life career, improving his community quality after studying at *Undana*, looking for more opportunities to do his Ph.D. degrees, and good quality lecturers of *Undana*. However, it is believed that it can always be made more coherent by modifying the clauses/sentences that form the paragraph as done above.

The fourth is Paragraph 4 (P4) consists of one sentence and 63 words. It is as follows:

Lastly, I wish to say my almighty God for his blessing and accompany me to take my scientific study in *Indonesia* very especially at my beloved University *UNDANA*, then I want to thanks full for my lectures of

English Education Program who encourage and taught me everything that related for my department, I will useful to develop my families, Societies and my country.

The contents/meanings of those words are generally coherent as in, "my almighty God for his blessing," (S1/L1), "my scientific study in Indonesia very especially at my beloved University UNDANA," (S1/Ls1-2), and "my families, Societies and my country" (S1/L3). However, there are some cases in which lexical coherence of this essay is not well-established because of the words/phrases which are incoherent, namely: 1) "to say my almighty God" (S1/L1); 2) "accompany" (S1/L1); 3) "to thanks full for my lectures" (S1/L2-3); 4) "encourage and taught me" (S1/L3); 5) "that related" (S1, L3); and, 6) "I will useful" (S1/L4). The first is not coherent because *to say* should have an object as in, "*to say thanks to* or *to thank*"; the second should be *accompanying* in order to make it parallel with the word *blessing* which is the object of *for* (a gerundial form); the third should be, *fully thank my lecturers*, that is, *to thank* as an infinitive is modified by the adverb *fully* and the whole phrase has *lecturers* as its object; the fourth should be *encourage and teach me* so that the verb *teach* is parallel with the verb *encourage*; the fifth should be *that/which is related to* or *related to* as an ellipsis; and the last one should be *I will be useful* since the linking verb *be* is needed to link *will* as an auxiliary with *useful* as its complement.

Despite all these incoherent words/phrases, the three sentences that form P4 are indeed coherent as each has its clear topics/subjects and focuses. However, they can be made more coherent by modifying them as follows:

Lastly, I wish to thank my Almighty God for His blessing and accompanying me to take my scientific study in Indonesia very especially at my beloved university, UNDANA. I then want to fully thank my lecturers at the English Education Program who encourage and teach me everything related to my department. I will be useful to develop my families, societies and my country.

Based on the analysis of the three sentences above, it is found that P4 is indeed coherent as it basically expresses three major things, that is, thanking God for blessing and accompanying Doa, thanking his lecturers for encouraging and teaching him, and hoping that he will be (more) useful for his country in the future.

The fifth is Paragraph 5 (P5). It consists of one single sentence and 19 words. It is as follows:

That's all for my whole reason that I have written on this page, if some words incompletely please apologize!

The contents of those words/phrases are generally coherent as in, "my whole reason" (S1/L1) and "on this page," (S1/Ls1-2). However, there are two cases in which lexical coherence is pretty poor, that is: 1) "for" (S1/L1); and, 2) "some words incompletely" (S1/L1). The first is not coherent because the use of the preposition *for* in that context is not suitable. So, deleting the word *for* would make the phrase *all my whole reason* coherent. Although it may be made better by changing it into this phrase: (These are) *all my reasons*. The second can be made coherent by making some modifications like (*if*) *some words are incomplete* or *some words are incompletely written*.

Despite those two incoherent phrases, the content/meaning of this sentence is coherent as its topic and focus is clearly written both in the first two clauses and in the last two clauses. However, this sentence can be made more coherent by changing it into two sentences as below:

That's all my reasons that I have written on this page. If some words are incompletely written, please apologize!

Since this sentence is relatively coherent and it is the only sentence that forms P5, it is, therefore, logical to say that P5 is coherent. It states several things which are coherently related, that is, concluding that Doa has stated his reasons and offering an apology if some expressions are not complete. Yet, P5 can be made more coherent by making some modifications as has been done above.

## **2. Global Coherence**

It has been stated that coherence is related to contextual meaning of a text (Yule, 1990: 106-107) and/or topics of a discourse (Taylor & Taylor, 1990: 46-49) as well as organization (Blanchard & Root, 2004:



61). That is, a text is locally coherent if its meanings at local level, i.e., words/phrases/paragraphs, “hang together” as discussed in the previous section and they are well/logically organized. It is also globally coherent if the whole meanings of a discourse/text as a whole also “hang together” with a logical organization. In that sense, Doa’s essay is not globally coherent because some paragraphs, i.e., P1 and P4, do not “hang together” with the whole idea of the essay, that is, reasons why the writer, Doa, wants to study at Undana.

In P1 and P4, Doa’s main idea and supporting sentences are not relevant to his reasons for studying at Undana. In other words, the contents of those two paragraphs are different from the whole content of Doa’s essay, despite the facts that both paragraphs are coherent in themselves. In P1, Doa simply describes Undana, whereas in P4, he thanks God for blessing him, thanks his lecturers for teaching him, and hoping for developing his family, communities, and country. These are not relevant to the topic of his essay, that is, why he studies at Undana.

In addition, it is also incoherent globally because it does not have a good organization, that is, it has no introduction with certain techniques leading to a thesis statement. As a result, its thesis development or essay content development is poor since some P1 and P4 are out of contexts.

Doa wrote his conclusion, yet it is not complete since a good conclusion should make concluding remarks by including one or more of the following techniques, that is, “restating major points, asking a question, suggesting a solution, making a recommendation, and making a prediction” (Blanchard & Root, 2004: 61). In addition, it includes in his conclusion a clause which is not relevant for a piece of academic writing, that is, “... if some words incompletely please apologize” (P5/S1/L1). Although this could be debatable, offering an apology is not that relevant in that context. This P5, however, is still regarded relevant because its overall content/meaning is relevant with the whole content/meaning of Doa’s essay.

Since Doa’s essay also contains some parts, that is, P2, P3, and P5 which are relevant to the whole topic/content/meaning of it (i.e., in those paragraphs, Doa states his reasons for studying at Undana and concludes them in P5, the essay is, therefore, partially coherent globally.

### **Cohesion**

Cohesion is analysed here within four major classification, that is, references, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 274), these are called grammatical cohesion. In this study, these types of cohesion have been the basis of Doa’s text analysis as described below.

#### **1. References**

Exophoric (situational) reference is not analysed here as a part of cohesive reference because the researcher believes that it is related to analysis of coherence which has been stated above. So, what is analysed here is endophoric (textual) reference analysis.

It is found that Doa’s text contains several types of reference, that is, personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference, but no cataphora. These can be seen in the following Table 1.

Table 1: References Used by Doa in His Text

Type of Reference	References Used	Places in Text
Personal	I (Referring to Doa as the writer)	P2/S1/L1; P3/S1/L1; P3/S1/L1; P3/S2/L2; P3/S2/L2; P3/S3/L5; P3/S3/L5; P3/S3/L6; P3/S3/L6; P4/S1/L1; P4/S1/L2; P5/S1/L1.
	my (Referring to Doa as the writer)	P3/S1/L1; P3/S1/L1; P3/S2/L2; P3/S2/L2; P3/S2/L3; P3/S3/L5; P4/S1/L1; P4/S1/L2; P4/S1/L2; P4/S1/L3; P4/S1/L3; P4/S1/L3; P5/S1/L1.
	me (Referring to Doa as the writer)	P3/S3/L5; P4/S1/L1; P4/S1/L3
	his (Referring to God)	P4/S1/L1

	it (Referring to the University of Nusa Cendana)	P1/S2/L2
	Its (Referring to the University of Nusa Cendana)	P1/S3/L2
Demonstrative	this (singular/near)	P1/S3/L2; P3/S2/L3
	that (singular/ far)	P5/S1/L1
Comparative	more (numerative)	P3/S2/L4

Doa is generally competent in using those reference as in, “The University of Nusa Cendana (Indonesian: Universitas Nusa Cendana) is a public university in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. It was established on September 1, 1962. Its rector is Prof. Ir. Fredrik L. Benu, M.Si., Ph.D.” (P1, Ss1-3, Ls1-3). In the example, Doa correctly uses *it* (P1/S2/L2) and *its* (P1/S3/L2) that both refer to *the University of Nusa Cendana*. This, among other things, makes S1, S2, and S3 of P1 cohesive.

## 2. Substitutions

It is found that Doa’s text contains some substitutions, that is, *some* (twice in P3, S2, L3, and in P5/S1/L1). This word *some* is used with “mass and plural nouns” (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 100), that is, to replace and/or to make ‘a’ or ‘another’ become plural. In addition, Doa also uses the article *the* (five times in P1/S4/L4; P1/S4/L4; P1/S5/L5; P1/S5/L6; and, P2/S1/L1), that is, to replace something or someone that has already been mentioned earlier or to indicate someone or something which is definite. These substitutions have been correctly used Doa. In P1/S4/L4, for example, Doa uses “*the*” in “... the Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi” (P1/S5/L6), which is in Indonesian meaning The Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia to show that it is a particular ministry of country called the Republic of Indonesia.

## 3. Ellipsis

In his text, Doa uses three kinds of ellipsis, namely: 1) “... Universitas Nusa Cendana ... is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the urban setting of ...” (P1/S4/L4); and, 2) “... everything that related for my department ...” (P4/S1/L3). In the first instance, what is deleted *which is* or *that is* between the words *institution* and *located*. So, if is completely written, it could be like this: “... Universitas Nusa Cendana ... is a non-profit public higher education institution *which/that is* located in the urban setting of ... .” In the second clause in which an ellipsis is used, what is deleted is the word *is*. This is, of course, not a good kind of ellipsis since the word *that* should not be used in the context. That is, the correct ellipsis should be this: “... everything related to my department ...” and its complete form is this: “... everything which/that is related to my department ... .”

## 4 Conjunctions

In his essay, Doa uses several conjunctions, that is: 1) *and*, additive conjunction, (8 times in P1/S3/L2); P1/S5/L6); P2/S1/L1); P2/S1/L2); P2/S1/L3); P2/S1/L3); P3/S2/L1); and, P3/S2/L3); 2) *as well as* (once in P2/S1/L3); 3) *also* (three times in P2/S1/L1); P3/S1/L1); and, P3/S3/L4); 4) *and/or* (twice in P2/S1/L2); P2/S1/L2); 5) lastly, temporal relation (once in P5/S1/L1); and, 6) *so* conjunction (once in P3/S2/L1). Another conjunctive element is also used by Doa, that is, *then* (twice in P3/S3/L5 and in P4/S1/L2). According to Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 237), *then* and other conjunctions like *yet* and *so* are conjunctions which generally “do not include any component of ‘and’; instead they frequently COMBINE with *and* ... .” Although Doa does not use *then* which is combined with *and* in his essay, yet he is able to use *then* and other conjunctions well in his essay.

## CONCLUSIONS

The EFL text by Doa shows that its local coherence, that is, coherence at word/phrase/paragraph level has been well-constructed although there are some cases in which local coherence is absent because of poor word/sentence/paragraph construction. In general, its local coherence has been well-expressed.

Its global coherence, however, is not as good as its local coherence because the text includes two paragraphs (P1 and P4) which are not relevant with the whole content/message/focus/meaning of the essay, that is, why the writer wants to study at Undana. This is worsened by the fact that the text is not well-organized; it has no introduction, no explicit thesis statement, and, therefore, no well-established thesis development (content development); it has its conclusion but it fails to implement good techniques of writing a conclusion like restating main points, predicting, recommending, and quoting.

It is relatively cohesive as Doa uses such grammatical cohesion as references, substitutions, ellipsis, and conjunctions. However, the text shows that in some cases Doa fails to use those types of grammatical cohesion variously and correctly which, in turn, makes his EFL writing, to a certain extent, incoherent locally and globally.

These findings, i.e. presence and absence of coherence and grammatical cohesion, are quite common in writing, particularly in EFL one, let alone for a piece of writing which has been produced within such a limited time as Doa has produced his writing (e.g. no enough time for editing and revising as well as proofreading). It is, therefore, important that writing activities in general, in EFL in particular, be conducted not only as natural as possible but also as often as possible. Such activities will improve one's writing competence which is seen, among other things, from its coherence and cohesion.

In that sense, although these research findings cannot be generalized because of its nature as a case study, yet some insights from this research results can be taken into consideration by any writer, a mature or a non-mature one, so that they can well build up coherence and cohesion in their writing in general, in EFL writing in particular.

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