

# The Pedagogical Implications of Coherence in English Argumentative Discourse by Indonesian Professionals

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## Abstract

In this global era, all educated people, such as professionals and college students, need to have English writing skills. Writing competence will facilitate professionals' success in their careers and students' success in their studies. However, coherent writing is a complex task that requires complex skills and is therefore not easy. For many Indonesian scientists, English scientific writing for international seminars or journals is likely still the hardest work (Suharno 2012). Based on the background above, this study investigated the coherence of English articles, such as argumentative discourses by Indonesian professionals. The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. It applies both topical and paradigmatic analyses. The data of the study include 14 English articles found in the "Opinion Forum" of *The Jakarta Post*. The research results reveal that, for the most part, English argumentative discourses by Indonesian writers are developed only partly coherently.

## Abstrak

Pada era global ini, orang-orang berpendidikan tinggi seperti para profesional dan mahasiswa perlu memiliki ketrampilan menulis dalam Bahasa Inggris. Kemampuan menulis dapat menjadi sarana keberhasilan para profesional dalam karirnya dan keberhasilan mahasiswa dalam kuliahnya. Namun demikian, menulis secara koheren memerlukan ketrampilan yang kompleks dan tidak mudah. Banyak ilmuwan Indonesia mengalami kesulitan menulis ilmiah berbahasa Inggris untuk seminar internasional dan artikel jurnal (Suharno 2012). Dengan latar belakang seperti ini, penelitian ini mengkaji tingkat koherensi artikel argumentatif berbahasa Inggris karya profesional Indonesia. Kajian deskriptif dan kualitatif ini menggunakan teknik analisis topikal dan analisis paradigmatis. Data penelitian ini adalah 14 artikel yang terbit pada kolom "Opinion Forum" harian *The Jakarta Post*. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar artikel ini kurang koheren.

**Key Words:** Argumentative Discourse, Writing Skills, Indonesian Professionals, Pedagogical Implications

## Introduction

Studies have been conducted to come up with various pedagogical significances for language teaching experts to improve their teaching practices. This study is also an attempt to offer some insights into language teaching, especially teaching writing to college students and professionals in Indonesia.

As stated by Richard J. Light (2001), Saul Geiser and Roger Studly (2001), writing competence will

facilitate students' and professionals' success in their studies and careers. For professionals, writing competence is essential to promoting their careers in their disciplines; for students, writing competence will foster success in coursework during their years of study.

Carrie Cameron (2007) finds that writing is not only difficult for students but also for professionals, such as scientists, writers, and editors. Daisy O. Almaden (2006) states that writing is a highly complex process for novice and non-novice writers alike, especially because it involves advanced skills that include critical thinking, logical development, and the

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coherence of ideas. Supong Tangkiengsiririh (2010) explains that professionals and university students need to be able to write coherently, since it plays a crucial role in disseminating information.

It is likely that English scientific writing for international seminars or journals is still the hardest work for many Indonesian scientists. Accordingly, Indonesian scientists do not yet have a significant level of participation in international scientific journals or other publications. In terms of scientific journal publication numbers, Indonesian universities have obtained the lowest rank in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Suharno 2012).

According to Angelika Storrer (2002), authors should design a coherent text. Coherence elements will make the text unified and facilitate the readers' comprehension. The explicit or implicit goal of most writers is to produce a coherent text that communicates to the reader, a coherence in written discourse is one major challenge confronting writers (Almaden 2006). However, this metadiscourse has rarely become a major analytical focus in the study of written discourse (Hyland and Tse 2004). Few studies have focused on the area of coherence, especially on the overall organization of a text. Based on this consideration, the coherence of English argumentative discourses by Indonesian writers is investigated using the parameters proposed by language scholars such as Suzanne Eggins (1994), Monroe C. Beardsly (1976), Michael A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1976), Austinus Ngadiman (1998), Icy Lee (2002), and Betty Bamberg (1983).

The English argumentative discourses investigated are those found in *The Jakarta Post's* "Opinion Forum" from 2009 to 2011. The articles are by writers who are experts in their fields, as illustrated by the curriculum vitae provided with each article. The writers are educated, have important positions in the society, such as doctors, directors, science writers, diplomats, economists, newspaper editors, lecturers, lawyers, heads of non-governmental organizations, researchers, bankers, and post-graduate students. Some of them graduated from overseas universities. Joellen M. Simpson (2000) refers to the articles as professional writing written by experienced writers. The writers are regarded as

experienced or "matured" because they are used to being exposed to English texts.

Thai Tran (2007) explains that the articles are comparable to college students' writings, and they are valid choices to represent college students' writings. Tran further explains that the articles in a newspaper are preferable data for advanced writing research because students' essays are usually short and rigidly controlled by the lecturers. Based on Simpson's and Tran's statements, the research findings can be used to develop a strategy for the teaching of writing to professionals and college students.

John E. Richardson (2007) explains that editorials are primarily argumentative; they are designed to convince readers of the acceptability of a point of view. Opinion writers use arguments and reasons to support their objectives.

The reasons for choosing texts in the "Opinion Forum" as the data for this study are threefold. Firstly, opinion texts are similar to college students' advanced writings insofar as they are in the mode of expository discourse that needs an argument to support a point of view. What is meant by advanced writing here is writing of an advanced level that may include essay writing, scientific writing, academic writing, research proposal writing, and research report writing. Secondly, the "Opinion Forum" offers argumentative discourses on various topics. Thirdly, the research findings can be useful not only to design a strategy to teach coherent advanced writing for college students and professionals in Indonesia but also to give information and input to *The Jakarta Post*.

## Theoretical Framework

This study is based on a theory that posits that coherent text will support readers and listeners in arriving at comprehension.

### *Argumentative Discourse*

James L. Kinneavy (1980) classifies discourse into the following four categories based on its objective: reference, literary, expressive, and persuasive. If the central attention of the discourse is the reader

(decoder) and the discourse aims to move him or her into action, it is called persuasive. Concerning discourse or text that argues, persuades, or convinces, linguists use various names, such as argumentative discourse, expository discourse, and exposition (e.g., analytical exposition, hortatory exposition). Whatever the name, the discourse is analytical discourse: it is one that analyzes and argues.

Mary J. Schleppegrell (2004) states that as students move to high school and beyond, they are expected to write expository essays, a genre through which writers present a point of view and support it with examples and evidence. The expository essay is symbolic of students' success with language at school. Students are expected to provide reasoned, concrete, and developed presentations of their points of view. Syntactic complexity is greater in exposition than in narrative or descriptive writing. When individuals engage in persuasive or argumentative discourse, they are engaging in an activity that inherently requires the logical interrelationship of propositions. Mary Macken (1991) defines an exposition as a factual text used to put forward a point of view involving logical rather than temporal sequencing.

Richardson (2007) claims that argumentative discourse is designed to convince readers of the acceptability of a point of view and to provoke them into an immediate or future course of action. Examples of argumentative discourse or exposition are letters to editors where the writers put forward opinions.

From the explanation above, we can conclude that argumentative discourse, expository discourse, and exposition are persuasive genres of writing. The purpose of the discourse is to persuade, to convince the reader or listener of the writer or speaker's point of view, by presenting a logical interrelationship of propositions or arguments and reasons.

### *Coherence and Cohesion*

The main feature of a text is unity. Thus, a text should constitute unity or present a unified whole, from the beginning to the end. What is meant by unity here is that the parts of the text hang together. There are

ties among the parts of the text. The main criteria to make a text unified are coherence and cohesion.

### *Coherence*

Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that a coherent text fulfills two regards: first, it is coherent with respect to the context of situation, and therefore consistent in register; and second, it is coherent with respect to itself, and therefore cohesive. Therefore, a coherent text has context of situation and cohesion. This means that cohesion facilitates coherence.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) also state that a coherent text possesses situational coherence and generic coherence. A text has situational coherence when the interlocutor can think of one situation in which all the clauses of the text occur: i.e., when he can specify a field, mode and tenor for the entire collection of clauses. A text has generic coherence when the interlocutor can recognize the text as an example of a particular genre.

Almaden (2006) states that continuity of sense is the foundation of coherence. Without such continuity, any piece of writing is just plain writing, without making much sense to the reader about the points it makes. Storrer (2002) states that text coherence is developed from linear text: i.e., text of sequentially organized content. Similar to Storrer, Beardslay (1976) states that a writer will be able to produce coherent, clear and stylistically error-free composition only through clear and straight linear development. Ana I. Moreno (2003) states that a coherent text has a contextual effect on the readers. A contextual effect is the impact of a new item of information on an existing representation of the world.

### *Cohesion*

Cohesion is the surface link between sentences of a text that holds the text together; the links between sentences are displayed in terms of metadiscourse markers and cohesive devices. This cohesive relationship in a text is referred to as texture.

Concerning the concept of cohesion, Jacob L. Mey (2001) states: "Cohesion is the way words formally hang together in sentences and the like, coherence

is content-based connectedness between the words that make them produce sense.” Stubb (1983) says, “cohesion has to do with relations between surface linguistic form, whereas coherence refers to relations between communicative acts.” Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that cohesion establishes local relations between syntactic items.

From these explanations, it is clear that cohesion establishes local relations between syntactic items, whereas coherence has to do with the global meaning involved in what we want to express. Coherence has more of a global function in a text than cohesion does. Cohesion refers to the surface structure or surface links of the text. The surface mechanisms bind a text together, while coherence refers to the concepts and relations underlying its meaning that contribute to the text theme.

#### *Cohesion Significantly Contributing to Coherence*

Based on her research results, Moreno (2003) finds that cohesive resources that contribute to the perception of the discourse relevance and coherence of the text deal only with meaning derived from whole sentences, larger fragments of text, or occasionally simple clauses linked paratactically.

In communicating meaning, language users cannot convey everything at once, and they cannot interpret the whole text at a time. They can only convey and interpret one short stretch of the text at any time. From this perspective, a written discourse can be viewed as a complex unit of meaning constantly evolving in the reading process. In order to be able to comprehend the text, a reader should be able to find out the relevance of the meanings. Relevance here means the relationship between propositions. Therefore, a text writer should provide the text with metadiscourse markers and cohesive devices that will facilitate the reading process.

In coherent discourse, two utterances may be connected in one of two ways: relevance of content or relevance of relational function. Cohesion that establishes the relevance of content is referred to as textual cohesion. It refers to the meaning derived from larger fragments of text: e.g., sentences or clauses. Other kinds of cohesions, known as point-to-point

cohesions, refer to less than a sentence and are not textual in nature. These types of cohesions build the relevance of wording (Moreno 2003). Thus, there are three mechanisms of coherence: (a) relevance of content, (b) relevance of wording, and (c) relevance of relational function.

#### *Relevance of Content*

Relevance of content is built when the interpretation of the current sentence (text of the moment) is affected by the interpretation of another larger segment in the text. Moreno (2003) describes the cohesion included in this framework as textual cohesion. Thus, to interpret an element of textual cohesion, a reader should refer to the meaning derived from larger fragments of text, such as sentences and clauses.

#### *Relevance of Wording*

Relevance of wording takes place when, rather than recovering the semantic content of the whole preceding coherence unit, the reader just needs to find the words used in order to establish the content of the current sentence. The cohesion included in this framework is called point-to-point cohesion, and frequently occurs in a text. It occurs in cases where a pronoun can be related to a noun phrase or a noun. It includes lexical cohesion. The referent of this cohesion is less than one sentence long, normally a word or a phrase. This cohesion also includes substitution and ellipses. This type of cohesion is not regarded as textual in nature and does not significantly contribute to relevance or coherence.

#### *Relevance of Relational Function*

This type of coherence mechanism arises when, trying to establish the relevance of the new coherence unit, the reader needs to interpret the discourse function of the previous discourse unit (text of the past) in relation to the discourse function of the current discourse unit (text of the moment). Thus, the propositions of the coherence units depend on each other. What the term “coherence unit” means here

is a sentence or clause. Ken Hyland and Polly Tse (2004) refer to this type of coherence mechanism as the logical connective, which expresses semantic relation between main clauses or sentences. The cohesion used to signal this relevance or relation is usually a conjunction. However, there are alternative means of signaling relational function, such as nominal, verbal, and adverbial. This mechanism of relational function or logical acts plays a significant role in establishing relevance or coherence in a text, serving as powerful textual construct on relevance. Thus, the logical connectors belong to textual cohesion.

In short, the types of cohesion that significantly contribute to the relevance or coherence of a text and that facilitate the reader's comprehension of the text are textual cohesion, comprising deictic acts, logical acts, and logical connector. Based on this reason, this study focuses on analyzing these cohesions. However, point-to-point cohesion will also be analyzed to support the analysis of textual cohesion: i.e., to know the level or proportion of textual cohesion compared with point-to-point cohesion, whether the textual cohesion is sufficiently used.

## Methodology

This study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. It describes the observed phenomena in the form of words rather than numbers. The study belongs to discourse analysis. To achieve this goal, the study was conducted in three stages: exploratory stage, descriptive stage, and explanatory stage.

### *Data of the Study*

Since the objective of this study is to find out the coherence of English argumentative discourses by Indonesian writers, the data of the study are the threads of ideas of English argumentative discourses written by Indonesians. The objects of the study from which the data are taken are 14 articles from *The Jakarta Post's* "Opinion Forum" between 2009 and 2011. The articles were concerned with various topics by writers of various professions, including doctors, scientists, and diplomats.

### *Method of Data Collection*

Coherence can only be established through what the writers express in the sequence of their ideas. Thus, in this study, threads of ideas of the texts were collected. In collecting the data, the first step was taking the English argumentative texts written by Indonesians from the "Opinion Forum" of *The Jakarta Post* in the last three years. Then, the texts were classified based on the topics and the writers' professions. Afterwards, 14 articles were selected on the basis of completeness. In the second step, the investigator made field notes concerning the profile of the argumentative discourses: i.e., the title, controlling idea (both the thesis statement and topic sentences), supporting ideas, the relationship between controlling and supporting ideas, paragraph unity, the metadiscourse markers, and cohesive devices.

### *Method of Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed at two levels of analysis: (a) at the micro or paragraph level, and (b) at the macro or overall composition level. The researcher performing the study attempted to find out the complete picture of the text features at the whole composition level. The following points were successively analyzed at the whole composition level: (a) title formulation; (b) thesis (in the thesis statement); (c) sub thesis and sub topic (in the topic sentence) at every paragraph; (d) coherence between paragraphs (relatedness between thesis of the whole discourse and with the topics of the paragraphs); (e) the flow of ideas or the pattern of organization; (f) the generic structure; (g) the situational variables (field, mode, tenor); (h) the cohesion; and (i) the correctness of grammar. At the paragraph level, the analysis included: (a) topic, (b) sub topics, (c) fullness of development, and (d) coherence within paragraphs or paragraph unity.

From the explanation above, it is clear that the analysis of the data in this study involved identifying topics and sequences of topics and ideas. This analysis is referred to as topical and organizational linear analysis (D'Angelo 1980; Lautamatti 1987; "Stepping Stones to Success and Coherence" 2010).

After the topical analysis was done, the investigator reread the texts and contemplated the underlying coherence pattern of the entire essay. Frank J. D'Angelo calls this activity paradigmatic analysis. He says that paradigmatic analysis is done by re-reading and contemplating the essay carefully and then extracting the pattern of the essay into a paradigm. Thus, this study applies topical-paradigmatic analysis. The analysis is dedicated to finding out the coherence elements: i.e., the organizational pattern, schematic structure, context of situation, metadiscourse markers, cohesive ties, paragraph development (introduction, conclusion, grammatical accuracy), and title formulation. Some elements are found at the whole composition level, while others are found at the paragraph level.

### *Coherent Text*

Coherent text has the following criteria: (a) linear organization, (b) does not shift topics or digress, (c) generic coherence (clear schematic structure with a clear purpose), (d) situational coherence (clear context of situation), (e) skillfully uses metadiscourse markers and cohesive ties, (f) fullness of paragraph development, (g) begins with clear and effective introduction, (h) concludes with a statement that gives the reader a definite sense of closure, (i) makes few or no grammatical errors that interrupt the discourse flow or the reading process, and (j) relevant title formulation. Partly coherent texts fulfill enough of the criteria above so that a reader will be able to make at least a partial integration and comprehension of the text. Thus, this criterion is in between coherent and incoherent criteria.

### *Incoherent Text*

Incoherent text has the following criteria: (a) nonlinear organization, (b) shifts topics or digresses frequently from the topic, (c) unclear schematic structure, (d) unclear context of situation, (e) uses few metadiscourse markers and cohesive ties, (f) incomplete paragraph development, (g) begins with an unclear and ineffective introduction, (h) creates no sense of closure, (i) makes numerous

grammatical errors resulting in a rough or irregular discourse flow, and (j) irrelevant title formulation.

## **Results**

After analyzing the data using coherence parameters proposed by the scholars, it is found out that three articles (21 percent) were organized coherently, while 11 articles (79 percent) were organized partly coherently. The full results of the data analysis can be seen in Table 1.

## **Discussion**

Before starting the discussion, the parameters used to analyze the text coherence level will be clarified briefly.

### *Parameters 1 and 2: Linear Organization; Does Not Shift Topics or Digress*

Texts developed with linear patterns do not digress because they do not wander off the central idea and do not change or leave the topic. Texts developed with a circular pattern, however, wander off the main topic and only return to the main topic when the texts are about to end. Moreover, texts developed with a digression pattern are characterized by leaving the main topic and starting with a new one, while a text developed with a parallel progression may digress or not. The main feature of a parallel text is repetition, and this repetition may digress or not from the discourse topic (Xing et al. 2008).

### *Parameter 3: Clear Schematic Structure with a Clear Purpose*

Schematic structure refers to text structure, which is the staged, systematic organization of the genre to achieve its purpose: i.e., to persuade and to convince the reader of the writer's point of view. Doing schematic structure analysis follows the steps of (a) recognizing the segments of the text, (b) identifying and differentiating stages within genre, (c) specifying obligatory and optional stages, and (d) devising structural formula (Eggs 1994).

**Table 1.** Coherence Level of English Arguments by Indonesian Writers

Text	Flow of Ideas			Title	Introduction	Generic Coherence	Situational Coherence	Significant Cohesive Devices	Fullness of Paragraphs	Closing	Grammar Errors	Coherence Level		
	Linear	Nonlinear										Coherent	Partly Coherent	Incoherent
		P	C											
1	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	insufficient	incomplete	clear clear	few		V	
2			V	broad	clear	clear	unclear	sufficient	incomplete	clear	few		V	
3		V		relevant	unclear	clear	unclear	insufficient	incomplete	clear	few		V	
4		V		relevant	clear	clear	clear	insufficient	incomplete	clear	few		V	
5	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	complete	clear	few	V		
6	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	complete	clear	few	V		
7	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	insufficient	incomplete	clear	few		V	
8	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	insufficient	complete	clear	few		V	
9			V	relevant	unclear	unclear	clear	sufficient	complete	unclear	few		V	
10	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	incomplete	clear	few		V	
11	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	complete	clear	few	V		
12	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	incomplete	clear	none		V	
13	V			relevant	clear	clear	clear	insufficient	complete	clear	few		V	
14			V	relevant	clear	clear	clear	sufficient	complete	clear	few		V	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>36</b>		<b>93</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>0</b>

Stephen Toulmin, Richard Rieke, and Allan Janik (1984) write that argumentative discourse contains six parts. The six parts are data, claim, warrant, backing, qualifier, reservation or rebuttal. Of these six parts, data, claim, and warrant are the most important and must appear in argumentative discourse. These three parts constitute the inferential core of an argumentative discourse. Thus, the schematic structure of argumentative discourse is as follows:

1. Data and Background (Obligatory)
2. Warrant (Obligatory)
3. Backing (Optional)
4. Qualifier (Optional)
5. Reservation and Rebuttal (Optional)
6. Claim and Conclusion (Obligatory)

The schematic structure above was applied to analyze the data in this study.

#### *Parameter 4: Clear Context of Situation*

Context of situation is the environment that affects the language use, such as who is involved in producing the text, what the text is about, and what role the language plays in the event. The three terms for the

elements are field, mode, and tenor (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Eggins 1994). A text has a clear context of situation when the reader can think of one situation in which all the clauses of the text occur, such as when the reader can specify a field, mode and tenor for the entire collection of clauses. A text lacks situational coherence if the reader cannot think of one situation in which the sentences occur. There is no coherence of field; there is a change from one field to another. There is no coherence in mode: e.g., some clauses reflect written language, while other clauses reflect spoken language. There is no coherence of tenor: e.g., we cannot determine what role the writer or speaker of the text is playing.

#### *Parameter 5: Skillfully Uses Metadiscourse Markers and Cohesive Ties*

The types of cohesion that significantly contribute to the coherence of a text and that facilitate the reader's comprehension of the text are textual cohesion comprising deictic acts and logical acts. Based on this reasoning, this study focused on analyzing these cohesions. However, point-to-point cohesion was also analyzed to support the analysis of textual cohesion: i.e., to know the level or proportion of

textual cohesion compared with point-to-point cohesion. A text has sufficient textual cohesion markers when 50 percent or more of the cohesion markers used in the text are textual in nature.

*Parameter 6: Fullness of Paragraph Development*

A paragraph is full and complete in its development when it has the supporting sentences it needs to explain the topic sentence (Oshima et al. 1999; Reid 2000). A text has fullness of paragraph development when most of the paragraphs in the text are developed fully (Ngadiman 1998). In this study, a text is classified as having fullness of paragraph development when 70 percent or more of the paragraphs in the text are fully developed. In this study, fullness of paragraph development is described as either complete or incomplete.

*Parameter 7: Begins with a Clear and Effective Introduction*

The introduction of an essay consists of a general statement and a thesis statement. The general statement will lead the readers to the subject of the essay in an interesting way and show them that reading the essay is worth their time. The thesis statement states the main topic, often lists the subdivisions of the topic or subtopics, and is usually the last sentence of the introductory paragraph (Oshima and Hogue 1999; Reid 2000; Boardman and Frydenberg 2002). In this study, the introduction is classified into clear and unclear.

*Parameter 8: Concludes with a Statement that Gives the Reader a Definite Sense of Closure*

The last part of an essay is the concluding paragraph, which should briefly restate the controlling idea in a somewhat different form or briefly summarize the significance of the main body. It can also offer a comment, suggestion, prediction, recommendation, or a solution that gives the writers a last opportunity to show that their ideas are worthwhile (Oshima and Hogue 1999; Reid 2000; Boardman and Frydenberg 2002).

*Parameter 9: Makes Few or No Grammatical Errors that Interrupt the Discourse Flow or the Reading Process*

In this study, the investigator identified, analyzed, and classified the grammatical errors into 12 categories, based on Charuporn Pongsiriwet's ideas (2001). The grammatical error categories are as follows: singular and plural noun error, pronoun error, tense, article, preposition, word form, verb formation, verb omission, subject omission, extraneous subject, subject-verb agreement, and fragment.

*Parameter 10: Relevant Title Formulation*

In English, a title should be clear, interesting, brief, and clearly reflect the discourse topic. It is like a promise that should be fulfilled by the author. Moreover, before writing a title an author should ask, "What is the essay to be about?" because hopefully from the title the reader can get a general understanding of the content of the essay (Oshima and Hogue 1999; Reid 2000). In this study, the title is classified into the following categories: broadly formulated, relevantly formulated, and irrelevantly formulated.

From Table 1, it is clear that argumentative discourses 5, 6, and 11 are written coherently, and arguments 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 are written partly coherently. The following paragraph will discuss one example of partly coherent texts and one example of coherent texts.

Argument 1 is partly coherent for the following reasons: (a) this essay begins with a general idea as the background, (b) it is then followed by a thesis that is explicitly stated, (c) the thesis is followed by relevant supporting ideas, (d) the title of this essay is also relevant with the discourse topic, and (e) the ending of the essay is also clear, in the form of suggestion. In other words, the essay is developed linearly or does not digress. The context of situation is also clear. Reading the essay, a reader will identify that the essay discusses the advantages of fasting for people's health. The essay is a scientific essay as indicated by the technical terms it uses, such as "calorie," "cardiovascular," "hypertension," "glucose," and "insulin." The role of the text producer



is also clear: i.e., as an expert writing to a general audience. The schematic structure of the essay is also clear. The background presents the fasting rule in Ramadhan. In the argument stage (warrant), the writer presents reasons why fasting is a healthy ritual: "Many advantages are obtained by doing fasting. But, in certain cases, fasting can be dangerous for people with certain condition." This reasoning is supported by the research results by scholars. The claim is also stated clearly in the form of a summary and suggestion: "fasting which is properly and carefully done makes people healthy; so do fasting." The purpose of the essay is to persuade the readers to fast during Ramadhan since it is advantageous to Moslems' health. The grammar competence of the writer is reflected in the minimal grammatical errors made in the essay: i.e., tenses, articles, singulars and plurals, and subject-verb agreements. However, the great numbers of incomplete paragraphs (15 of 24), hampers the coherence of the essay. Only 37.5 percent of the paragraphs in the essay are fully developed. There are two kinds of incomplete paragraphs or paragraph fragments. The first kind is the presence of excessive indentation. Indentation, of course, does not make a paragraph. When one complete paragraph includes several indentations, disjointedness occurs. Examples are as follows:

1. In terms of hypertension, Alan Goldhamer said that almost 90 percent of subjects achieved blood pressure less than 140/90 mmHg (millimeters of mercury) by the end of the treatment program.
2. During this research, the average reduction in blood pressure was 37/13 mmHg, with the greatest decrease observed in subjects with the most severe hypertension.
3. Patients with Stage 3 hypertension (those with systolic blood pressure greater than 180 mmHg, diastolic blood pressure greater than 110 mmHg, or both) had an average reduction of 60/17 mmHg at the conclusion of treatment.

These three paragraphs develop one idea: i.e., the advantages of fasting for hypertension subjects. Therefore, the three paragraphs should only

make up one paragraph. Moreover, since they are indented, their connection is interrupted. The other kind of paragraph fragment results from an undeveloped topic sentence. The paragraph fragments may distract the readers because these incomplete paragraphs reduce the continuity of ideas. The number of textual cohesion markers that significantly contribute to coherence used in this essay is 46 percent, less than 50 percent, in proportion to that of point-to-point cohesion, 54 percent, meaning that the text producer is not so skillful in using textual cohesion. Moreno (2003) states that cohesion significantly contributes to the coherence of a text and facilitates the readers comprehension. These two features, incompleteness of paragraphs and insufficient textual cohesion, reduce the coherence of the essay and make the essay classified as only partly coherent (Rustipa 2013).

Argument 11, on the other hand, is developed directly and linearly. The thesis is directly stated in the second sentence of paragraph 1: "Live broadcast restriction sparks protest, however, it is needed for the benefit of the public as a form of broadcasters' responsibility." The situational and generic coherence is clear, meaning that the text makes sense. The context of situation comprises field, live broadcast limitation; tenor, a friend to her friends (journalists); and mode, casual language indicated by the frequent use of the words "we," "our," "us," and "let's." The schematic structure is clear. The background presents how the restriction of public access to live TV broadcasts of court has sparked public protests, including those from the Press Council. In the claim, the writer presents suggestions and opinions: "KPI, as the institution of regulation for broadcast industry, shall go on with its policy of live broadcast limitation. Since the broadcasting industry uses free public sphere, broadcasters' responsibility is needed." The reasoning for the claim is presented in the argument stage: "Many of us regard the Court's live broadcast as true, then via the media commit a trial. Actually, in journalism, the facts do not always reflect reality and truth. Airing a trial proceeding without limitations might create chaos." The backing for the argument is from the live broadcast of the Court hearing, US slogan, US regulation of live broadcast.

The communicative purpose of the text is clear: i.e., to persuade journalists to accept the live broadcast restriction. Most paragraphs of the text, 11 out of 14 (78.6 percent) are developed fully. This means that the ideas are connected, not interrupted. The continuity of ideas is also supported by the grammatical accuracy of the text and the sufficient textual cohesive markers (54 percent). The use of engagement metadiscourse markers increases the coherence of the text since they can change a dry text into a reader-friendly text.

Based on the research findings in Table 1, the weaker features of the English arguments by Indonesian writers are paragraph development, the insufficient use of textual cohesion markers, the flow of ideas, the introduction, and the situational coherence. Fifty percent of the data have problems with the fullness of paragraph development, 43 percent of the data do not use sufficient textual cohesion markers, 36 percent of the data are not developed linearly, 14 percent of the data do not have clear introduction, and 7 percent of the data do not have relevant titles. None of the articles have problems with grammatical accuracy.

### **Suggestions and Pedagogical Implications**

After analyzing the data using the coherence parameters proposed by the scholars, it is determined that just 21 percent of the argumentative texts are organized coherently, while the other 79 percent are organized partly coherently. This means that the English arguments of Indonesian writers are, for the most part, only partly coherently developed. The main features that reduce the text coherence are the insufficient textual cohesion markers and the incompleteness of paragraph development.

From the literature, we know of four major methodologies for teaching writing: the product-based approach, the process-based approach, the genre-based approach, and the literacy-based approach (Kern 2000; Al-Khasawneh 2010). The product-based approach highlights model, form, and duplication. The students are required to study model texts and attempt various exercises that enable them to draw attention to relevant features of a text, and then

replicate them in their own writing (Arndt 1987; Badger and White 2000; Myles 2002). The process-based approach focuses on how a text is written instead of the outcome, emphasizing the importance of certain procedures such as pre-writing, drafting, evaluating, and revising. The teacher involves the students in the process of writing as what happens in real world (Hyland 2003). The genre-based approach focuses on the role of social context or discourse communities in shaping communication. It emphasizes teaching genres that the teacher thinks the students need to write in or which will be useful for them (Harmer 2009). Finally, the literacy-based approach emphasizes the dependency of writing on reading: i.e., on text analysis. The students are led to become critics for their own writing, instead of relying too much on the teacher's feedback (Kern 2000).

The purpose of all of these approaches is to help students write coherently. H. Douglas Brown (2001) argues that there is no best approach; there should be balance between the writing process and the final product. Thus, a wise teacher realizes the interdependencies among textual products, cognitive processes, and the socio-cultural dimensions of writing. The skill of text analysis also needs to be taught to the students so that they can self-reflect and analyze their own writing.

Based on the research findings and the considerations above, the coherence-based approach to teaching advanced writing is designed. It is an integrated-based approach: i.e., it combines the product, process, genre, literacy-based approaches. The findings of the data analysis using the coherence parameters reveal the weaknesses and the strengths of the English argumentative discourses of Indonesian writers.

Coherence-based teaching means teaching the elements of coherence. The teaching materials are refined from the coherence elements. The weaker elements, based on the research findings, will be more emphasized and obtain a greater teaching time allotment, while the strong elements will not be ignored. Thus, in teaching writing to college students and professionals, the teachers start with the concept or elements of coherence explicitly because the teaching objective is to make the students competent

in writing coherently. It is therefore recommended that teachers apply coherence-based teaching as an alternative teaching strategy in order to offer more constructive help to their students. By coherence-based teaching, it is more likely that the students will understand how the coherent elements work in a text. Then the students can apply them to building coherence in their own writing.

The materials for coherence-based teaching designed on the basis on the research findings are: (a) relevant title formulation, (b) clear and effective introduction, (c) fullness of paragraph development, (d) cohesion and metadiscourse markers, (e) discourse organizational development, (f) argumentative genre, and (g) clear conclusion. The most problematic materials based on the research findings are fullness of paragraph development, cohesion and metadiscourse markers. Fifty percent of the data have problems with paragraph development. Therefore, this material needs emphasis and more teaching time allotment.

Based on the research findings, even advanced writers have problems with cohesion in writing. Forty-three percent of the data have problems with textual cohesive markers. That is why this material also needs emphasis. The students should be made aware of the differences between textual and point-to-point cohesion. Students should be taught that cohesion establishes three kinds of relevance: relevance of content, relevance of wording, and relevance of relational function. Other cohesion that needs to be taught is interpersonal metadiscourse markers. They help to construct a coherent text that reflects the writers' personality, credibility, considerateness of the reader, and the relationship to the subject matter and to the reader. Interpersonal metadiscourse markers are key elements in argumentative and persuasive writings (Rustipa 2012a, 2012b).

Lee (2002) shares that to help students understand how the elements of coherence function in a text and improve their writing, the materials on each of the coherence features are used in the following five stages of instruction: introductory activities, explicit teaching, student handouts, awareness-raising tasks, and follow-up writing practice. Based on Lee's

ideas, the list of seven materials mentioned above are presented in the five instructional stages.

In the introductory activities stage, the teachers introduce the topic to the students and stimulate their interest. In the explicit teaching stage, the teachers provide the students with explicit explanations, preferably using authentic model texts. In the students handouts stage, the students need to internalize and consolidate understanding of the teaching materials by learning the handout. In the awareness-raising tasks stage, the students do a range of text analysis tasks in order to apply the concept they have learned. In the follow-up writing practice stage, the students apply the concepts to their own writing.

From the explanation above, it is clear that coherence-based teaching is an integrated approach; it is product-based because the students are exposed to the model text in the explicit teaching stage; it is process-based because the students do the writing process in the follow-up writing practice stage; it is genre-based because the argumentative genre is one of the teaching materials; and it is literacy-based because the students do text analysis in the awareness-raising tasks stage.

The results of the study will also give information to *The Jakarta Post's* editors and journalists concerning the level of coherence of its articles. This information may be taken into consideration in upgrading the personnel in order to compensate for the weaknesses and maintain the strengths since designing the coherence of the English articles is not only the responsibility of the native writers but also the responsibility of the non-native writers.

Higher education institutions should help the English media, such as *The Jakarta Post*, to overcome the challenges or matters identified in the articles since the media are targeted not only to the Indonesian-speaking community but also to the English-speaking community. It is important because media discourse has potential power and significance to influence the public. Journalism can shape people's opinions and reinforce their beliefs. It can also persuade the public to participate in immediate or future action.

Higher education institutions have a duty to do community service. In this case, it can upgrade the

English scientific writing competence of media personnel and other professionals using coherence-based teaching as an alternative strategy. By this, hopefully Indonesian scientists' participation in international scientific journal publications can be increased.

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