

## STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL IN USING COHESION AND COHERENCE ON DESCRIPTIVE ESSAY

**Batdal Niati,**

[batdaln@gmail.com](mailto:batdaln@gmail.com)

University of Pasir Pengaraian, Indonesia

**Wirda Jannatul Jannah**

University of Pasir Pengaraian, Indonesia

[wirdajannatuljannah@upp.ac.id](mailto:wirdajannatuljannah@upp.ac.id)

**Dita Anggini**

[ditaanggini18@gmail.com](mailto:ditaanggini18@gmail.com)

University of Pasir Pengaraian, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

This research aimed to know how students' skill in writing descriptive essay and what types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence used on descriptive essay. It was quantitative research. Total sample was 36 students. In collecting the data, the researcher used a writing test. Writing components were used to analyze data; Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Language Use, Mechanic and then analyze the result of the types cohesion. The findings showed that the students' skill in writing descriptive essays was in the fair level with the score 69,31 with content 21.01 score had the fair to poor level, organization with 14.52 score had the good to average level, vocabulary with 14 score had good to average level, language use with 16.74 score had fair to poor level and in mechanics with 3.34 score had fair to poor level and the types of cohesion used were 60,50% used reference on their descriptive essay and followed by 31,55 % conjunction, 5,51 % substitution, 1,35 % reiteration, 0,96 % collocation, and 0.09 % ellipsis. Then, in the ways to achieve coherence also used 61,42 % repeating key nouns, 31,69% used consistent pronoun, 4,42% used transition signals to link ideas and 2,45% in arranging ideas in logical order. It meant that students were quite capable of writing descriptive essay and they had used all of the types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence but they still need to be improved.

**Keywords:** Cohesion, Coherence, Descriptive Essay.

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the most useful talents to have when learning a language besides reading, speaking and listening. Some experts have a different understanding of writing. According to (Pablo & Lasaten,

2018, p. 46), Writing needs a variety of skills, which makes it a challenging task. (Alostath, 2021, p. 647) also suggests that writing is an important talent that demands thorough comprehension, another opinion

about writing was from (Jannah & Antoni 2023, p.3079) they said that there are several problem faced by the students in writing skill such as: they do not master the good mechanics of writing so that it makes them get difficulties to write and produce a good writing , so students might practice it without experiencing any difficulties. In addition, he claims that writing as a process is an approach based on the process (pre-writing, editing, re-drafting, and publication). (Muluneh, 2018, p. 2) says that writing success can be attained by viewing writing as a recursive process that involves setting intentions, creating drafts, publishing work, and receiving feedback.

From some of the explanations for the definition of writing above, it meant that writing is a method of collecting and managing information and knowledge, as well as forming and structuring how it is communicated to readers. One type of writing skill taught is a descriptive essay. (Maulana, 2020, p. 41), defines that A descriptive essay is one that goes into great depth to explain or describe its subject. The four most popular forms of writing are expository, argumentative, descriptive, and narrative. It implies that descriptive essay is one of the writing skills to describe something, be it a person, place, situation, etc. in written form. Students must construct sentences that have a relationship

or relationship between them when writing this essay. Functional linguistics have used two ideas, cohesion and coherence, to make relationship.

Two of the unique components needed for writing are cohesion and coherence, particularly when it comes to the way sentences are combined and organized into paragraphs. (Priangan et al., 2020, p. 29) additionally states that cohesion should always be presented in the text. It's because cohesiveness encourages text clarity, which is achieved through the employment of cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are the words and strategies a writer uses to make the reader understand the connection between ideas in a work. Cohesion, then, is a technique for linking concepts in a sentence or phrase. It means cohesion is a method of connecting ideas in a paragraph or phrase. Cohesion can aid in the text's coherence. It implies that coherence was used to connect the ideas inside the text to one another.

Based on the data obtained from the lecturers of the 4th semester writing course, they had studied cohesion and coherence on descriptive essay in the previous semester, namely in the writing II course with a hybrid learning process because at that time the country of Indonesia was still hit by the covid19 virus. The researcher

also obtained information from various 4th semester students regarding cohesion and coherence in writing descriptive essays, that some of them said that making a cohesive and coherent text was quite easy because explanations were easily accessible on this material. Then there were those who said it was difficult, a little difficult and very difficult for several reasons, namely forgetfulness, lack of understanding of the previous material caused by online learning, difficult to find suitable words to make connected sentences, difficult to distinguish between cohesion and coherence, and quite difficult to reach.

It was important for researchers to examine the use of cohesion and coherence

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Writing is one of the four basic skills that students should learn and develop in a foreign language, along with speaking, listening, and reading. The capacity to express ideas or convey ideas thought concepts on paper with specifics is known as writing. (Agdia & Syafei, 2020, p. 417) says that writing is the process of putting thoughts into written form. It is frequently seen as an imaginative method of

### .2.1. Definition of Cohesion

on descriptive essays made by fourth semester students because in the previous semester they had studied cohesion and coherence, as well as variations in their responses regarding writing cohesive and coherent essays, so it was possible that they could make good or bad descriptive essays by using cohesion and coherence.

As a result, based on the preceding explanation, the researcher conducted a research to find out the students' skill in writing descriptive essay at fourth semester of English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian and what types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence used on descriptive essay at the Fourth Semester of English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian.

communication where the thoughts can coalesce into a solid paragraph. A writing rubric is a tool for rating students' writing proficiency on a range from terrible to excellent for a particular writing job. We must utilize a writing assessment to rate someone's writing, typically in the form of a rubric evaluation, they were content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanic from (Weigle, 2016, p. 116)

Cohesion and coherence should be used to create a solid essay. Halliday and

Hasan in (Nijat, 2022, p. 7) states that cohesive devices written and spoken communication grammatically correct. They divided cohesiveness into lexical and grammatical categories. Reference, substitution, conjunctions, and ellipses are examples of grammatical cohesion, while repetition and collocation are examples of lexical cohesion.

## 2.2. Definition of Coherence

Coherence is the ability to rationally follow one another or have a relationship between sentences for the reader to properly understand the content you aim to convey in writing; this is known as coherent writing.

The coherence and cohesion of the writing serve as indicators of good writing. According to (Septiwan & Al Hafizh, 2021, p. 134), coherence is a trait of good academic writing. Academic writing must be coherent in order to connect all writing-related thoughts to a single topic. It results in writing that develops into a complete work. Though coherence in academic writing aids writers in logically and fluidly organizing their ideas. As a result, coherence is essential to producing writing that is truly informative. As a result, it is crucial that both writers and readers pay attention. Oshima & Hogue in (Ahmed,

that is simple to comprehend. According to (Ahmed, 2019, p. 132), coherence is the result of a variety of elements that work together to make each sentence contribute to the overall meaning of the work. The harmony that is generated between the ideas by the order of the words is known as coherence. The transition from one sentence to the next should be seamless. Coherent ideas are those that are arranged in a clear and logical manner. There must be a connection or relationship between each sentence. (Ahmed, 2019, pp. 132–133) clarified that here are four ways to achieve coherence in writing: repeating key nouns, using consistent pronoun, using transition signals to link ideas and arranging ideas in logical order.

## 2.3. Descriptive Essay

Writing essays is one of the writing exercises that are taught in English department classes. An essay is a piece of writing that offers a topic, according to (Niati & Rasyidah, 2020, p. 68). There are six genre essays, one of which is the descriptive essay, according to (Amaniarsih 2016, p. 58–59). The other five are as follows: The first sort of text is narrative; it serves to inform or entertain its audience. The second type of writing is recount; it serves to inform or entertain its audience. The third type of writing is

expository, and examples include but are not limited to letters, newsletters, manual pamphlets, definitions, instructions, guidebooks, catalogues, newspaper pieces, magazine articles, and research papers. Exposition texts aim to educate, inform, clarify, define, or guide. The fourth type of text is argument, which aims to persuade readers to choose a side and support it with evidence. The final sort of literature is discussion; it aims to persuade readers by taking a stance and defending it from both sides.

## **METHODS**

This research design was descriptive quantitative research because the purpose of this research only to know How is Students' Skill in Writing Descriptive Essay and What Types of Cohesion and the Ways to Achieve Coherence used on Descriptive Essay at Fourth Semester of English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian. There were some steps in collecting the data: first, the researcher asked permission from the writing course lecturer to conduct research, the second researchers explained briefly about descriptive essay, cohesion and coherence to students, the third researchers provided instruction papers to students to do a descriptive essay writing test. Finally,

after the students finished the test, they collected it to the researcher to start the process of data analysis. The researcher gave the essay to the raters to assessed based on the rubric in writing assessment, range score and all items of cohesion and coherence were classify based on their types and then it was provide in the table, number of cohesion and coherence devices was count in the form of percentage. The formula to be used present as follows:  $P = \frac{N}{T} \times 100$ . P= is percentage, N= types or sub types in cohesion and coherence, and T= total of cohesion and coherence, this result used as support material of raters in determining the score, also based on the rubric writing assessment taken from Weigle (2002, p. 116) which has been adapted according to this research needs, after getting the result from the raters, the researcher was accumulated their scores based on the range of the score for skill in writing descriptive essay for getting the average from their each score so that the researcher can know how is students' skill in writing descriptive essay at fourth semester at English study program at university of Pasir Pengaraian, and then the researcher also accumulate the result each components of writing based on rubric

assessment and range score in writing. The range score can be seen as follows :

Table 1: The range of the score for skill in writing descriptive essay

Range of the Score	The level of the Skill
80-100	Very Good
70-79	Good
60-69	Fair
55-59	Poor
0-54	Very Poor

(Dirgeyasa, 2018, p. 5)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In finding the data of the research, the researcher have given 5 choices topic in make descriptive essay for the fourth semester students which was purposed to find out the students' skill in writing descriptive essay and know what types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence used on descriptive essay at fourth semester of english study program at university of pasir pengaraian. The topics were A Cat, Handphone, My Family, University of Pasir Pengaraian), Sunflower. There were 36 students who have chosen the topic. The result of the choice were 36 students who have chosen 1 topic out of 5 topics given by the researcher in writing a cohesive and coherent essay. The result was, there are 15 students who choose the topic A Cat, 7 students choose the topic Handphone, 3

students choose the topic My Family, 5 students choose the topic University of Pasir Pengaraian and 6 more choose the topic Sunflower.

As the purpose of this research is to analyze Students' Skill in writing descriptive essay and what types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence used on descriptive essay at fourth semester of English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian. Based on the data that have been analyzed and accumulated by the researcher, it showed that in the types of cohesion there were 60.50% references used in their descriptive essays, followed by substitution 5.51%, ellipsis 0.09%, conjunctions 31.55%, reiteration 1.35%, and 0.96% collocation. Next for the coherence items also got results of 61.42%

using repeated key nouns, 31.69% using consistent pronouns, 4.42% using transition signals to connect ideas and 2.45% in arranging ideas in the same order logical. Furthermore, the final results in the students' skill in writing descriptive that assessed by the rater based on the data above and using the Weigle writing assessment rubric and accumulated by the

researcher. The rubrics contained 5 writing components. They were content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. The object research in this research is a descriptive essay made by the fourth students of English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian and assessed by 3 raters based on 5 components of rubric assessment in writing.

Table 2. The Percentage of accumulation of data from researchers to obtain the final score to find out the writing skill of the students.

No	Range	Frequency	Percentage	Level
1	80-100	4	11 %	Very Good
2	70-79	15	42 %	Good
3	60-69	12	33 %	Fair
4	55-59	3	8 %	Poor
5	0-54	2	6 %	Very Poor

From the table above, we can conclude that the students' skill in writing descriptive essay at the fourth semester in English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian was in the **Fair** Level with total average score were **69,31**. The average writing skill level dominated other writing level. From 36 students, there were 15 students whose writing levels in good level or there were 42% the students writing level were in good level. While 33% or 12 students were in fair level, then 11% or 4 students were in very good level, besides that, there were also 8% or 3 students in poor level.

Last, 6% or 2 students were in very poor level.

It mean they could make enough descriptive essay that cohesive and coherent even though still needed to upgrade and improve the writing ability in using cohesion and coherence, it caused their essay still limited in knowledge of paragraph and inadequate development of topic, meaning confused frequent error of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing. The score for each writing components could be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Five Writing Components Average Scores

NO	Writing Components	Score	Level
1	Content	21.01	Fair to Poor
2	Organization	14.52	Good to Average
3	Vocabulary	14	Good to Average
4	Language Use	16.74	Fair to Poor
5	Mechanics	3.34	Fair to Poor

Based on the table above, we could see that the organization and vocabulary were at the good to average level because their descriptive essays are quite cohesive so that they could achieve coherent text by using component cohesion and coherence according to the context of their descriptive essay, then also the vocabulary in their descriptive essay was educative range error of word form. Besides that, content, language use and mechanics were still at the Fair to poor level because their descriptive essays in

the content section were still limited in knowledge of paragraph and inadequate development of topic, then in the language use section their descriptive essays made meaning confused and last in the components mechanics, their descriptive essay still frequent error of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and meaning also confused.

#### Types of cohesion

The grouping of the researchers' result analysis types of cohesion the students' can be seen table below :

Table 4. The result of classification of types cohesion

No	Code Essay	RF	SB	EL	CJ	RT	CL	Total
1	001	11	2		7	1	1	1033
2	002	31			5			
3	003	30	4		12	1		
4	004	10	1		8			
5	005	3	1		11			
6	006	26			9			
7	007	41	4		13	1		
8	008	19			8			
9	009	20	2		6			



10	010	9	1		13	1	
11	011	18	4		16		5
12	012	18			16		2
13	013	41	3		14	1	1
14	014	26	1		13	1	
15	015	22	1		11		1
16	016	17	5		18		
17	017	18	3		10	1	
18	018	14	2		14		
19	019	17	1		6		
20	020	14	2		6		
21	021	27	4	1	10		
22	022	16	1		1		
23	023	6			5		
24	024	6	1		2		
25	025	9	2		1	1	
26	026	13	2		13		
27	027	22			12		
28	028	11	1		4	1	
29	029	6			7		
30	030	19	1		10	1	
31	031	18	1		14		
32	032	16	1		4	2	
33	033	14			8	1	
34	034	12	2		7		
35	035	14	3		5	1	
36	036	11	1		7		
Total		625	57	1	326	14	10

Based on the table above, there were 625 times they had used reference in their descriptive essay or 60,50 % reference that

their used, then followed with using substitution 57 times or 5,51% had used substitution, 1 time ellipsis or only 0.09% , 326 time conjunction or 31,55%, 14 time

reiteration or 1,35%, and 10 time collocation or 0,96% had used collocation. It could be concluded that semester 4 used more references followed conjunction, substitution, reiteration, collocation and rarely used ellipsis. In the cohesion section in the first types, namely reference, in this section what they use in their essays were the, you, this, that, there, I, it, my, they, our, we, then, us and he. For substitution, they have used one, not, do, so, same. Then, for the ellipsis, there is only one time, namely in the sentence “do you like cat? yes, almost everyone likes this cat animal”. Furthermore, for conjunctions they have used, and, also, for, but, also, because, however, then,

furthermore, only, at the same time, though, and moreover. Furthermore, reiteration, on this item they have used, namely the kinds of cat, sweet-cute, type of faculty, advantages - positive impacts, love-care, houses-home, types of sunflowers, handphone-smartphones, kinds of colors, kinds of facilities in UPP, types of scholarships, cute-soft. Finally, for collocation, they have used several words, namely available, smartphone, flashlight, facebook, outside, homeland, and shortcoming.

#### **The ways to achieve coherence**

The grouping of the researchers' result analysis the ways to achieve coherence of the students could be seen table below :

Table 5. The result of classification of the ways to achieve coherence

Coherence						
No	Code Essay	RKN	UCP	UTS	AI	Total
1	001	11				407
2	002	2		3		
3	003	3	3			
4	004	9				
5	005	6	2			
6	006	12	4	2		
7	007	6	1	1		
8	008	5	5			
9	009	3				
10	010	5	3	2	1	
11	011	4	3	1	1	
12	012	5	8		1	
13	013	10	8		1	

14	014	9	3		1
15	015	8	2		2
16	016	12	1		
17	017	8	1	1	
18	018	3	4		
19	019	14			
20	020	4	13		
21	021	8	5	2	
22	022	11	6	2	
23	023	3	1		
24	024	2			
25	025	8	2	1	
26	026	12			
27	027	6	6		
28	028	15	1		
29	029	5	4		
30	030	10	11		
31	031	3	12		
32	032	7			
33	033	6	8		1
34	034	9	5	2	2
35	035	3	2	1	
36	036	3	5		
Total		250	129	18	10

Based on the table above, there were 250 times or 61,42% they have used repeating key nouns in their descriptive essay, then followed with using consistent pronoun 129 times or 31,69%, 18 times or 4,42% using transition signals to link ideas and 10 times or 2,45% used item arranging ideas in logical order. It can be concluded

that the fourth semester has been able to apply the use of repeating key nouns in their descriptive essay. In the coherence, in the first ways, namely repeating key nouns, they have used word cat, smartphone, university of pasir pengaraian, family, handphone, mobile phone, phone. The second was using consistent pronoun, in this ways, the have

used his, him, which, their, what, myself, how, everyone, them, all, another, itself, who, our self, himself, themselves, other. The third was using transition signals, in this items, they have used, besides, first, next, in addition, in conclusion, in fact, for the example. The last was , arranging ideas in logical order, in this items, they have used word advantages-disadvantages, positive-negative, good-bad, love-annoying, sad-happy, lazy-active. From the analysis of all the data above, it could be concluded that students' writing ability of the fourth semester in the fair level with the score is 69.31 and we could also see in the types cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence that the researchers analyzed that not all items of cohesion and coherence they used, only on types cohesion reference and ways to achieve coherence repeating key nouns that they often used.

Based on the finding, it was found that the skill in writing descriptive essay at fourth students English Study Program University of Pasir Pengaraian is **fair** with **69,31** score This final result was **fair** caused by the components organization and vocabulary in their essay were quite cohesive so that they can achieve coherent text and their descriptive essay were educative range error of word form but in content, language use and mechanics still limited in knowledge of

paragraph and inadequate development of topic, meaning confused, frequent error of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, we could also see the types of cohesion and ways to achieve coherence used in their descriptive essay, the result was that the types of cohesion they use more often was reference, then followed by conjunction, substitution, reiteration, collocation and ellipsis which was the lowest because they rarely use it. Then in the ways to achieve coherence section, repeating key nouns were the items that they use the highest or most frequently, followed by using consistent pronouns, using transition signals and the lowest or rarely items arranging ideas in logical order.

The skill in writing descriptive essays of the fourth semester was still categorized at a fair level. Because indeed the ability to write was indeed one of the most difficult skills among the 3 other English skills besides reading, speaking, listening, so that should to improve, this is according to what (Harliani et al, 2021, p.49) said that they claim that writing is the most difficult skill among the other skills, they also said that Cohesion and coherence are the things to take into account in producing a good writing. Not only Harliani, based (Lindasari et al, 2022, p.17) The importance of studying cohesion and

coherence was to build a good communication between the speaker and the listener or the writer and the reader. So, the information could be delivered well. Cohesion and coherence help us carry over a thought from one sentence to another and etc. Not only this research has fair results, previous studies also exist, namely the research conducted by (Hasanah, 2017, p.i) the result was good enough, the cohesiveness of the students exposition writing were remains high and they have

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding that the writing skill of the fourth semester students English Study Program at University of Pasir Pengaraian is Fair with score 69,31. This score was the result of the average from the total scores that raters were made. This final result that was fair, it mean they could make enough descriptive essay that cohesive and coherent even though still needed to upgrade and improve the writing descriptive essay, it caused their essay still limited in knowledge of paragraph and inadequate development of topic, meaning confused frequent error of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing. The types of cohesion and the

good enough understanding in building coherence with same result also in the item reference more high among the other items.and (Lismay, 2020, p.80) with need to be improved results caused lack of motivation, limited lecture duration and prior English knowledge. Those reasons bother students' capacity in academic writing so that the students express ideas through the writing usuriously.

ways to achieve coherence that they used, more often were reference, then followed by conjunction, substitution, reiteration, collocation and ellipsis which is the lowest because they rarely used it. Then in the ways to achieve coherence section, repeating key nouns were the items that they used the highest or most frequently, followed by using consistent pronouns, using transition signals and the lowest or rarely items arranging ideas in logical order. Therefore, to make a good descriptive essay, their essay should get all the components with the good score and should use all the types of cohesion and the ways to achieve coherence.

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