

THE USE OF TRANSITIONS IN THE STUDENTS ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY

SUZANA MEYLITA RACHMAWATI

suzana.meylita@gmail.com

YUNIK SUSANTI

yuniksusanti@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

One of academic writing assignment is argumentative essay. A way to make a coherent paragraph is using transitions which should be clearly and demonstrated in an argumentative essay. Transitions can be words and/or phrases that connect the idea in one sentence with the idea in another sentence. By using transitions, the writing can be read smoothly. The purposes in conducting the study are to know and describe the use of transitions in student's writing argumentative essay and the awareness of the students about using transitions. This is a qualitative research-content analysis. The subject of the research is the third grade students of English Department in academic year 2015/2016. There were 23 students: 3 good students, 17 average students, and 3 poor students. The instruments are documents, interview, and student's journal. After collecting the data, the next step is analyzing them by using coding system, tabulation, and describing them.

The results of this research are 1) almost all good students used transitions in essay correctly although there were few incorrect usages, then the average students and poor students had more corrections because they put the transitions in the wrong place, chose inappropriate transitions, used wrong grammatical, and over-use transitions, 2) All students in each category had good knowledge about the transitions, such as its definition, its types, and its function, how importance using transitions are. But sometimes they still felt difficult to use transitions. In conclusion, most of students in every category used transitions correctly even though there were some corrections, then the third grade students of English Department were conscious of transition signals, but they need more practice to apply it in the sentences in order to make their writing had better quality, easier to read and more understandable.

Key Words : Argumentative Essay, Transitions

BACKGROUND

Writing is the most difficult skill. It is considered as the most complicated language skill to be learned, compared to other language skills. Brown (2004: 218-246) says that among the language skills, writing is the most complicated and the most difficult skill. It is because in writing, there are several rules that have to be mastered by the students such as spelling, grammar and punctuation, coherence and organization of ideas. It means that the students should master writing although it is difficult because writing can be a way to keep a communication between one and one another and the students have to be able to construct the paragraph coherently.

In University, one of academic writing assignments is argumentative essay. Here, the researcher chooses an argumentative essay because in argumentative essay, the students are able to write as free as possible but still in the context depending on their mind. Oshima and Hogue (2006: 142) support that statement because the argumentative essay is an essay in which students agree or disagree with an issue, using reasons to support their opinion. This essay also forces the students to think on their own. They have to take a stand on an issue, support their stand with solid reasons, and support their reasons with solid evidence.

Knowing about the organizational structure of academic writing, it can be said that in academic writing, the students should give attention not only in its organizations of idea but also in its coherence. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007: 78), a coherent paragraph flows smoothly from beginning to end. Three ways to give paragraph coherence are using nouns and pronouns consistently throughout a paragraph, using transition signals to show relationships among ideas, and setting ideas into some kind of logical order, such as logical division. In this research, the researcher takes only a way to make a coherent paragraph that is using transitions because it is obviously needed in argumentative essay. Transition signals are words and phrases that connect the idea in one sentence with the idea in another sentence. Transitional signals show movement from either the pro side to the con side or the other way around, like "on one hand", "on the other hand", "however", should be clearly and demonstrated in an argumentative essay.

The students in University should aware of using transitions in their writing but the use of transitions (connectives) almost is ignored in teaching and learning

process. This causes the learners confused in using and understanding how and where the transitions can be applied in their writing. McCarthy (1998, see Badiozzaman and Gorjian, 2014: 99) believed that the ability to form a coherent discourse is one of the important aspects of second/foreign language learners' communicative competence. Therefore, if language learners want to create a connected and well-structured written discourse, they should gain the right use of cohesive devices, such as connectives, in order to develop their essays in a cohesive way.

Related to the reasons above, the researcher needs to conduct a research entitled "An Analysis of Using Transitions in Writing Argumentative Essay of The English Department Students at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri Academic Year 2015/2016". In this study, the researcher decides to focus on the third grade students of English Department at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri, especially some good, average, and poor students in writing. Their writing score can be looked up from first up to fifth semester whether stable or not to put in good, average, and poor category. Good category, here, means the students who got minimum three scores "A" in writing, then average category means the students who got mostly score "B" in writing, and poor category means the students who got score "C" and/or "D" in writing. Then, the researcher considers that using transitions is the best way to make their writing, argumentative essay, coherently. The objectives of the research are to describe the use of transitions in student's writing argumentative essay and also to describe the awareness of the English Department students about using transitions.

METHODS

This research used content analysis to analyze and describe the use of transitions in student's argumentative writing. The human in qualitative research is the primary instrument. In this research, the researcher asked the documents of student's writing and interviewed the students. Hence, the existence of the researcher was emphasized because the goal of this observation referred to the document and the interview. The research conducted at the third grade students of English Department in University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri. For taking a sample, the purposive sampling was used. There were 23 students: 3 good students, 17

average students, and 3 poor students. The data of the research were students and student's document. The data collecting procedures are as follows; first, taking the student's document about argumentative essay. Second, interviewing some students in each category using guided interview and stimulated recall methodology (SRM) and asking them to write their journal. The following are the steps in using the stimulated recall method based on Hidayati (2008: 29): First, the researchers distribute copies of the text to the subjects to be checked by them. Then, she asks them to underline words in their writings wherein they thought they have used transitions. Then, if they do not have any idea or have already forgotten about the transition words, researcher gives the subjects the list of transitions by bringing out the subjects' understanding indirectly. The questions such as 'what, how and why' are used to recall their memory. After they have finished underlining the transition words, researcher compares their findings to the researcher's own findings. At last, researcher interprets the result to find out the meaning and insights from the data.

The coding system was used to know the use of transitions in student's writing. Then the data were analyzed using percentage formulation to count the frequency then the data from interview and students' journal, to know their awareness in using transitions, were described qualitatively.

In qualitative research, the result needs to be checked its validity and reliability. This research had inter-rater to analyze the data, especially in finding the appropriate use of transitions, in order to measure and compare that the range of score between the researcher and inter-rater is not too far. In conclusion, the results of the research are valid and reliable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this research can be seen from the result of data analysis. First, to know the use of transitions in student's argumentative essay, the researcher made tabulation below and divided it into three categories of students :

Table 1

THE PERCENTAGE OF EACH TYPE OF TRANSITIONS USED BY STUDENTS

NO	TYPE OF TRANSITIONS	GOOD	AVERAGE	POOR
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		(%)	(%)	(%)
1	IN ORDER OF TIME	17.57	15.43	5.32
2	IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE	9.46	5.41	0.00
3	ADD A SIMILAR OR EQUAL IDEA	10.81	20.44	24.47
4	ADD AN OPPOSITE IDEA	4.05	7.01	8.51
5	EXPLAIN OR RESTATE IDEA	0.00	0.00	0.00
6	MAKE A STRONGER STATEMENT	0.00	0.80	0.00
7	GIVE ANOTHER POSSIBILITY	9.46	4.81	5.32
8	GIVE AN EXAMPLE	2.70	1.20	3.19
9	EXPRESS AN OPINION	0.00	0.20	1.06
10	GIVE A REASON	21.62	16.03	18.09
11	GIVE A RESULT	9.46	4.21	1.06
12	ADD A CONCLUSION	0.00	0.60	0.00
13	SHOW SIMILARITIES	14.86	23.45	31.91
14	SHOW DIFFERENCES	0.00	0.40	1.06

From the table above, it is known that the most transitions used by good students were the use of transitions to give a reason in the number of 21.62%, and the least transitions used by good students were the use of transitions to explain or restate an idea, to make a stronger statement, to express an opinion, to add a conclusion, and to show differences in the number of 0%. Then, the most transitions used by average students were the use of transitions to show similarities in the number of 23.45%, and the least transitions used by average students was the use of transitions to explain or restate an idea in the number of 0%. Last, the most transitions used by poor students were the use of transitions to show similarities in the number of 31.91%, and the least transitions used by poor students were the use of transitions in order of importance, to explain or restate an idea, to make a stronger statement, and to add a conclusion in the number of 0%.

Besides, it is also found that the correct and incorrect use of using transitions in writing argumentative essay. In good student's criteria, the use of transitions in order of time is 13 transitions (17.57%). It is found that all students used this type correctly with its function to show the time in their sentences, for example, '**Second** is the cheater mostly will not able to catch the main point of the lesson'. Then, in average student's criteria, the use of transitions in order of time is 77 transitions (15.31%). It is found that most students used this type correctly, for example, '**The first reason**, cheating is unfair to others'; but some students used it both correctly

and incorrectly, for example, 'If a college student cheats on all the work they do for their major, **when** and if they get a job, that person will be totally unprepared and be a total mess at work, yet be paid for something they don't know how to do'. Then, in poor students criteria, the use of transitions in order of time is 5 transitions (5.32%). From the data, it is found that only two students used this type and they used it correctly. An example of this type is 'This case happens **when** their parents to pamper their children until their children dare to lie'.

Second, to know the awareness of the students about using transitions, the researcher not only interviewed good student, average student, and poor student, but also asked them to write a journal. Then, there were found three most important points (the knowledge of transitions, the importance of using transitions, and the effects of using transitions), and they were supported by student's journal. From the result of interviewing, the students had knowledge about the transition well; they also understood that transitions can help their writing more coherent and more qualified, but they still felt difficult and confused to use some transitions, then they also have some corrections in grammatical when they put transitions in a wrong place, so it can make the readers confused to interpret what they wanted to express their ideas.

Those findings support Yolanda, Jufri, and Fitriawati's research (2013: 366-367) that good students could do the test on using transitions well. Those students got the highest score and the most correct use transitions. Then, average students had more errors than good students on writing sentences by using transitions. Also, the researcher, in this study, found that most poor students used transitions correctly but some of them used it incorrectly because of the placement of transitions in the sentences, the grammatical, and over-use using transitions in the text that could make readers confused to read their essay. This finding did not support Yolanda, Jufri, and Fitriawati's study (2013: 366-367) that poor students had many errors almost in every part. On the other hand, this first finding supports Letsoela (2013: 110-111) who indicates that the errors did not affect text comprehensibility, these were mainly grammatical and the difficulties interpretation for the reader about what the writer was trying to say even though he/she had used transitions. Also, it supports Whitaker's theory (2009: 17) that explained although they are very helpful, there are two big problems with using

transition words, such as students over-use them and students often use them incorrectly. It means that too many transition words at the beginning of sentences can be annoying and when students want to use proper transitions, they are able to see in the list of transitions.

Second, it is found that all students in each category had good knowledge about the transitions, such as its definition, its types, and its function; they also understood that transitions can help their writing more coherent, more qualified, and more understandable. From the interpretation above, the third grade students of English Department, good, average, and poor student, were conscious of transition signals. This is supported by Cenoz and Hornberger's theory (2008: 3) who state that language awareness is concerned with making learners conscious of, and able to use language patterns successfully. In the other hand, they still felt difficult and confused to use some transitions, then they also have some corrections in grammatical when they put transitions in a wrong place, so it can make the readers confused to interpret what writers wanted to say. This finding also supports Badiozzaman and Gorjian's study (2014: 98) that EFL learners often have problem in the proper use of connectives to organize their sentences into a coherent unified whole. This issue was the result of lack of understanding the proper use of transitions in writing essays.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, first, most of students in every category used transitions correctly even though there were some corrections, such as the placement of transitions, omitting some repetition words or clauses that were wasting, and the grammatical. the third grade students of English Department, good, average, and poor student, were conscious of transition signals, but they need more practice to apply it in proper use in the sentences in order to make their writing had better quality, easier to read and more understandable.

So, the suggestion are given to English teachers, students, and other researchers. First, the teacher should be able to give detail explanation about transition words to the students when teaching writing. Then, the students should be able to find which transitions are difficult and asks them to their teacher or in the internet, so they will not feel difficult to apply them in the sentences. It is better

to explain them in each type. At last, it is hopefully for other researcher to consider the balance data, so the data will be more representative and the result will be clearer.

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