THE PARAGRAPHS DEVELOPED IN OBAMA’S REMARK

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ABSTRACT

This article tries to construe (1) how the paragraphs in Obama’s remark are developed (2) how the paragraphs are logically structured. The study is based on the theory of how a paragraph should be properly developed. This is actually a descriptive qualitative study. Therefore, the writers only provide answers to the questions by explaining the phenomena of developing paragraphs as implicitly applied in Obama’s remark. The results indicate that Obama’s remark is partly developed in paragraphs with complete elements (55%) and partly with incomplete elements (38%). Two (5%) out of the paragraphs remain undeveloped because they are gambits, the introductory part of the greeting, and the other one (2%) is not developed because it is part a closing expression in order to end the remark. While the methods employed in developing the paragraphs vary from deductive reasoning to definition, and the methods which dominate are inductive reasoning (38.6%), deductive reasoning (31.8%) and cause and effect (13.6%). The development of the paragraphs fulfills the unity, the cohesion and coherence, and the completeness in disseminating ideas, therefore, the writers may say that the paragraphs are logically structured though some parts may not be logically structured.

Key words: remark, paragraph development, logical structure, methods of developing paragraphs, cohesion, coherence, unity, completeness

INTRODUCTION

In a political world, remarks of a head of a state could be very important due to the country’s political stance. Obama’s remark at the Indonesia University, for example, is very important merely because (a) he is the leader of a superpower (b) this remark colors the history of American diplomatic relations with Indonesia. The condition forced whoever made or prepared the remark to put ideas orderly, avoiding obscurity of expressions and ambiguities.

Putting ideas orderly means that information is presented in such a way as to fulfill the necessary conditions of a coherent text, which consists of coherent paragraphs. Eggin (1984) states that a paragraph should be developed in a logical, systematic and empirical structure, scientifically understood as a generic structure potential. Halliday (1985) describes that a paragraph is developed in a topic sentence and followed by
extension, elaboration, and enhancement which is well known as supporting details, and then followed with a closing sentence.

There are already many studies about the development of paragraph such as the one conducted by Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008) which analyze the errors in paragraph writing in English by first year Medical Students of the Four Medical Schools, Mahidol University. Meanwhile Limone (1978) studies the effective method for teaching paragraph development. This article, though, sees a paragraph development from a different angle, the paragraph development in a remark, which does not undergo a number of editing process in order to meet the requirements of good writing.

Based on the explanations and arguments developed in the introduction, the writers propose two questions:
1. How are the paragraphs in Barack Obama’s remarks developed?
2. How are the paragraphs in Barack Obama’s remarks logically structured?

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Barack Obama’s remark as a text**

When words are put together to communicate, a piece of text is created. Creating a text requires us to make choices of words we use and how we put them together. Choice of words should not use complicated words that listeners do not know the purpose or meaning. Therefore, the choice of words does not only relate to the accuracy of usage the words, but also to whether the selected words can be accepted or not by the listener, or whether they can ruin the atmosphere existing or not. Each speaker should try as carefully as possible in the choice of words to be able to achieve the purpose to be conveyed (Kerf, 1984 : 88-89).

A good text should express ideas or images that exist in life. Ideas or images are set forth in the form of language, such as a remark. The text of a remark is a text or manuscript that is used by a speaker to convey an idea or ideas to the audience. In a remark text words (diction) used should be varied, interesting, and effective, thus, making it easier for the reader or listener to receive the intent and purpose of the remark.
Within these are various text types, there are two main categories of texts such as literary and factual. Each text type has a common way of using language. In literary texts, there are three main text types in this category such as narrative, poetic, and dramatic. It can make us laugh or cry, think about our own life or consider our beliefs. Meanwhile, factual texts, the main text types in this category are recount, response, explanation, discussion, information report, exposition and procedure. It presents information or ideas and aims to show, tells or persuades the audience.

A remark or speech is categorized as a type of a recount text. A recount is a piece of text that retells past events, usually in the order in which they happened. The purpose of a recount is to give the audience a description of what occurred and when it occurred. This text consists of orientation, list of events and reorientation. A recount is constructed by using sentences. These sentences give the audience details about the subject. A good recount should give exact details. When constructing a recount, people should use words that give the most details.

A remark is a spoken text that can have a variety of purposes. A recount speech would be one where the speaker tells the audience about a past happening. The speaker would recount the events in the order in which they took place. Obama’s remark discussed in this article belongs to this recount text and has a function as to recount to the audience about past happenings.

**Stratification of language**

Bloomfield (1984) points out that language has elements such as phoneme, morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph, and article. Language is enacted as a series of relationships. These series of relationships are can be vertical characteristics and can also be horizontal characteristics may relate to language stratification. Therefore, paragraph in the strata of language is also known as one of the units of some other unit, and the position can be seen as follows:
The paragraphs developed in Obama’s remark
Liliek Soepriyatmadji & Mahsusil Janah
Obama’s remark is an article, which is at the discourse level and contains many paragraphs which should have been developed in such a way as acceptable.

**Paragraph Development**

Paragraph is a unitary form of use of language to express thoughts or topics and it is under the level of discourse. Paragraph has the potential to consists a few sentences. Paragraph which consists of only one sentence is not further developed. Each paragraph contains the unity of topic, the unity of thoughts or ideas. Paragraph development is a rather simple procedure, no matter how fancy or formal the writing is, all paragraphs are basically developed the same way. Thus, each paragraph has a topic sentence and the explanatory sentences. The merger between the main sentence and other sentences in the paragraph should have unity, coherence, and completeness. According to Ramlan (1993) the main idea is controllers within a paragraph. In fact, the topic sentence in the paragraph has a variety of possibilities, i.e.: at the beginning of the paragraph, at the end of the paragraph, but is rarely found in the middle of a paragraph. Body or supporting detail contains sentences that clarify the main ideas exposed in the paragraph. While conclusion is the last chance to tie the paragraphs together and assure that the readers have understood the purpose and main idea, or to reaffirm the things that are important in the body.

Akhadiah et. al. (1991: 148) explain that the requirements in developing a paragraph are unity, coherence, and completeness. Unity refers to the extent to which all ideas contained within a given paragraph hang together in a way that it is easy to understand or each paragraph contains one main idea. Therefore, in the development of a paragraph, the descriptions in a paragraph should not deviate from the main idea. Coherence means well-organized. This requirement explains that a paragraph is not just a collection of sentences, each of which stands on its own but built by the sentences that have a reciprocal relationship. This needs cohesive devices, words and phrases within a sentence, between sentences in a paragraph, and between paragraphs that unite the paragraph. These words or short phrases establish relationships between parts of sentences, between sentences, between topic sentences and the thesis statements, and
between paragraphs. Completeness relates sufficient explanatory sentences and clarity in order to support the topic sentence or main idea.

**Methods of paragraph development**

Developing a paragraph is essential in academic writing. This means that we must employ certain methods of paragraph development in order to develop a good paragraph. Methods of development are patterns to organize ideas about a topic. According to Tarigan (1998) there are ten methods of development used to organize supporting material in a paragraph such as: (1) point of view, (2) climax and anticlimax, (3) extended definition, (4) classification, (5) comparison or contrast, (6) analogy, (7) cause or effect, (8) general-specific, (9) example, and (10) process.

1. Point of view is the development of a paragraph based on the position of an author in seeing something.
2. Example or illustration is the development of paragraph by making a point about a topic and providing examples to support it.
4. Extended definition provides information or meaning to a term.
5. Comparison and contrast is two or more ideas are said to be compared if their common points or similarities are emphasized.
6. Classification is the grouping together of items or objects according to a given basis.
7. Cause and Effect relationship can develop effective paragraphs by describing what happens and why it happens.
8. Analogy explains one object or process in terms of another.
9. Reason is not really ways to develop a paragraph; they are ways to think. There are two basic kinds of logic or reasoning: (a) Deductive Reason - you look at all the facts and determine a conclusion, (b) Inductive Reason - you look at all the facts and determine a rule for why they occurred.
10. Detail is the most common and easiest form of paragraph development, simply expand on a general topic sentence using specific examples or illustrations.
RESEARCH METHOD

Design of the Study

This study is descriptive qualitative in nature because it is meant to construe the development of paragraphs in a remark.

Unit of analysis

Unit of analysis is a certain unit which is considered as the research subject (Arikunto, 2002: 21). The unit of analysis in this research paper is paragraph, however, the writers also see the utterances of the paragraph as significant elements which develop a paragraph.

Data and data source

The writers try to analyze how the paragraphs of Obama’s remark at Indonesia University are developed. Therefore, the data source of this study is Obama’s remark at Indonesia University, downloaded from http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-pressoffice/2010/11/10/remarks-president-university-indonesia-jakarta-indonesia.

Data collection

In collecting the data, the writers used observational method. This means that the writers collected the data from Obama’s remark by firstly observing the text. Thus, language that is used in the remark becomes the focus. The steps are as follows:

1. Selecting, the writers chose Obama’s remark script.
3. Reading, the writers read the remark in order to understand the text.
4. Segmenting, the writers segmented Obama’s remark script into paragraphs, which are subject to analysis.

Data analysis

The data analysis is the method used for analyzing the collected data. In analyzing the data the writers follow the following steps:

1. Reading, the writers read the segmented paragraphs of Obama’s remark script to get good understanding of the paragraph development.
2. **Analyzing**, the writers conducted a data analysis on each of the paragraph of Obama’s remark text based on the criteria of developing a good paragraph. These criteria are used as guidelines to determine the accuracy of developing paragraphs as theorized in chapter two.

3. **Identifying and classifying**, the writers identified all the paragraphs in the data and classified if the paragraphs belong to acceptable and unacceptable paragraphs on the bases of how a paragraph is theoretically developed. Thus, the writer classified if the paragraphs are well developed and how they are logically structured.

4. **Presenting the results**, the writers presented the result of the data analysis. This time, the writers explained if the paragraphs of Obama’s remark text are well developed. This may relate to the research questions presented in the introduction. They are: (1) how are the paragraphs in Barack Obama’s remarks developed? (2) how are the paragraphs in Barack Obama’s remarks logically structured?

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The Paragraph Development in Obama’s Remark

There are forty-seven paragraphs in Obama’s remark. They mostly contain introduction, body and conclusion. The details are presented in table 1

Table 1: Elements of Paragraph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Elements of Paragraph</th>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Topic Sentence, Supporting Details, Concluding Sentence</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,15,17,18,19,21,23,28,30,33,35,38,39,40,41,42,43,44</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Topic Sentence, Supporting Details</td>
<td>10,11,12,13,14,16,20,22,24,25,26,27,29,31,32,34,36,37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Topic Sentence</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Concluding Sentence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most paragraphs (26 paragraphs) in Obama’s remark consist of the three needed elements in a paragraph, i.e.: topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding paragraph. Eighteen paragraphs (38%) contain the elements of topic sentence and supporting details. Two paragraphs (5%) contain only topic sentence; this may be a kind
of gambit that is an introductory part such as greeting, presented in order to begin a speech. There is also one paragraph (2%) with only one concluding sentence, a closing expression used to end a speech.

Below is an example and the explanation of the paragraph categorized as possessing the three elements (topic sentence, supporting details, and concluding paragraph).

**Topic sentence**: *Pulang kampung nih.* (Applause)

**Supporting details**: 
*I am so glad that I made it back to Indonesia and that Michelle was able to join me. We had a couple of false starts this year, but I was determined to visit a country that’s meant so much to me.*

**Conclusion**: 
*And unfortunately, this visit is too short, but I look forward to coming back a year from now when Indonesia hosts the East Asia Summit.* (Applause)

There are also incomplete elements such as topic sentence and supporting details only in the remark. The example is as follows:

**Topic sentence**: *Now, this change also extends to politics.*

**Supporting details**: 
*When my stepfather was a boy, he watched his own father and older brother leave home to fight and die in the struggle for Indonesian independence. And I’m happy to be here on Heroes Day to honor the memory of so many Indonesians who have sacrificed on behalf of this great country.* (Applause)

**Method of Paragraph Development**

In order to communicate ideas that have interest and value, a speaker must decide the audience. The audience is an essential concept because a speaker must make decisions about topics, evidence, method of presenting material, and even grammar (vocabulary, sentence structure, and verb tenses). Therefore, in presenting his remark in order to be good and not boring for the audiences, Obama may have done a pretty good preparation in delivering his remark. The preparations may include topic, audience, and the organization of the remark.
The organization of the remark may be seen in the method of paragraph development, which could be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Method of Paragraph Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Method of Paragraph Development</th>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Deductive reason</td>
<td>1,2,6,8,9,10,15,18,28,29,31,35,36,40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Comparison and contrast</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sequence or point of view</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sequence or Chronological</td>
<td>7,12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cause and effect</td>
<td>11,14,17,20,39,44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Classification</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inductive reason</td>
<td>13,19,21,23,24,25,26,27,30,32,33,34,37,38,41,42,43</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reads that there are several methods of paragraph development used in Obama's remark. They are Deductive reason (31.8%), Process (2.3%), Comparison and contrast (2.3%), Sequence or point of view (2.3%), Sequence or Chronological (4.5%), Cause and effect (13.6%), Classification (2.3%), Inductive reason (38.6%), Extended definition (2.3%). This could mean that the paragraphs in Obama’s remark may be developed using inductive reason, deductive reason and cause and effect methods.

The following are the examples and explanations of the dominant methods of developing the paragraphs.

a. **Inductive reason**

The method that explains the paragraphs that begin with a particular statement and ends with a conclusion is called specific general paragraphs. In paragraph 13, the first part of the sentence “Those things that I learned to love about Indonesia -- that spirit of tolerance that is written into your Constitution”, indicates a particular statement and the second sentence “that spirit of tolerance that is written into your Constitution” indicates a conclusion.

b. **Deductive reason**

In paragraph 1, the sentence “We had a couple of false starts this year, but I was determined to visit a country that’s meant so much to me” indicates a fact that
determines a conclusion. The first sentence “we had a couple of false starts this year” includes a general statement, meanwhile the expression “but I was determined to visit a country that’s meant so much to me” is a specific statement.

c. Cause and effect

Cause and/or effect paragraphs investigate why things are as they are, or why something happened, or the effects of an event or a situation. In paragraph 11, the sentence “And even though my stepfather had served in the Army, the violence and killing during that time of political upheaval was largely unknown to me because it was unspoken by my Indonesian family and friends” indicates cause and effect.

Determining Logically-Structured Paragraphs

Barack Obama’s remark is very interesting because the choice of words and the style of language that conveys messages are easy for the audience to understand. This may be the consequence of the condition that the proper development of the paragraphs in his remark. This may also be the result of the logically structured paragraphs created in the remark. Therefore, it could be concluded that the paragraphs in his remark may mostly have their own unity, coherence, and completeness.

The unity of a paragraph usually presents generalizations about the topic before specific information. Each of the paragraphs of Barack Obama’s remark could be categorized as possessing unity because it has one main idea. At least there are 26 paragraphs which possess one main idea each.

Each paragraph in Obama’s remark can also be said to be coherent because the paragraph is established logically. This means its contents are interconnected coherently as a whole. There are three types of cohesion techniques in each of the paragraph: (a) the use of pronouns, word that refers to humans and objects are usually replaced with pronouns to avoid boredom. This wording serves to maintain cohesive sentences in a paragraph. For example, the use of pronoun it for 1967, Indonesia, Development, etc (Paragraph 11) (b) the repetition of keywords and phrases, which functions to protect the coherence of all sentences in the paragraph. For example, Development, Democracy and Religious faith are a keywords in Obama’s remark because they are repeated in the paragraph. (c) the use of transitional words and phrases, this is to indicate the
The paragraphs developed in Obama’s remark
Liliek Soepratmadji & Mahsusil Janah

Cohesiveness of a paragraph, words or phrases (group of words) are used in a variety of relationships. For example: **Introductory words** (Paragraph 1) *And unfortunately, this visit is too short, but I look forward to coming back a year from now when Indonesia hosts the East Asia Summit.* (Applause); **Subordinate conjunctions** (Paragraph 2) *Before I go any further, I want to say that our thoughts and prayers are with all of those Indonesians who are affected by the recent tsunami and the volcanic eruptions*;

**Coordinate conjunctions** (Paragraph 4) *Betchaks and bemos, that’s how you got around.*

The paragraphs are also said to be under completeness category because they contains explanatory sentences sufficient to support the clarity of the topic sentence or main sentence. For example: *So with the rest of my time today, I’d like to talk about why the story I just told -- the story of Indonesia since the days when I lived here -- is so important to the United States and to the world. I will focus on three areas that are closely related, and fundamental to human progress -- development, democracy and religious faith. First, the friendship between the United States and Indonesia can advance our mutual interest in development.*

**CONCLUSION**

Here the writers conclude that Obama’s remark is partly developed in paragraphs with complete elements (55%) and partly with incomplete elements (38%). Two (5%) out of the paragraphs remain undeveloped because they are gambits, the introductory part of the greeting, and the other one (2%) is not developed because it is part a closing expression in order to end the remark. While the methods employed in developing the paragraph vary from deductive reason to definition, and the methods which dominate are inductive reason (38.6%), deductive reason (31.8%) and cause and effect (13.6%). The development of the paragraphs fulfils the unity, the cohesion and coherence, and the completeness in disseminating ideas, therefore, the writers may say that the paragraphs are logically structured though some parts may not be logically structured.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


