**Lecture 2**

**Unity and Coherence**

Good academic writers follow specific steps to make sure that their writing is clear and accurate. They gather, organize, and develop ideas; write drafts, and then revise each draft through looking for unity and coherence, key characteristics of a paragraph.

**Unity** in writing means “oneness” i.e., the connection of all ideas to a single topic. A paragraph must deal with only one idea, and all the sentences of the paragraph must support that idea **(one idea=one paragraph).** The controlling idea is clearly identified in the topic sentence. The supporting sentences must support or explain the controlling idea with examples, details, steps, or definitions. The concluding sentence should restate the idea in the topic sentence; otherwise, the paragraph will not be about one single idea, and hence, loses focus.

**E.g.:** **The topic sentence**: My friend Ellen is a generous person

**Supporting sentences**:

* She often lets travellers stay in her home.
* She has hosted many students temporarily.
* She sends money to her family in London every month to help them with their bills.
* She always brings flower of food to her friends when they are sick or have a need.

**Concluding sentence:** Ellen is one of the most generous person I know.

One can notice that all the sentences are about Ellen’s generosity. A sentence about the way she look or about her job will not support the unity of the paragraph unless it somehow relates to Ellen’s generosity.

**Coherence** refers to the arrangement of sentences in a clear order through using a logical sequence of ideas. It means that sentences are so well linked and arranged together that not one could be interchanged with another (they stick together).

To make a paragraph coherent and link between ideas and sentences, writers

**-Repeat key words** (using the same word again will emphasize the mentioned idea).

**-Use synonyms**

**-Use pronouns** (it, they, this, that, these, those). Pronouns add coherence as they:

* smooth the flow of the sentences;
* maintain focus on the controlling idea;
* eliminate awkward repetition of nouns;
* help to knit a paragraph together by referring to nouns in previous or following sentences or sentence parts.

• Use pronouns only when they are needed; be sure that every pronoun has a clear antecedent and be certain that every pronoun agrees with its antecedent in person, number and, if possible, gender throughout a paragraph.

E.g.: There are many people who claim that global warming is the most significant threat facing us today. They argue that it is a danger not just the current generation, but also the generations to come. Indeed, it is this threat to our future that is the most concern. One effect of global warming is there will not be enough food to feed the world in the near future.

**-Use transition words and phrases**. These words are put at the beginning, middle, or the end of the paragraph.

There are three ways in which you can arrange ideas in a paragraph. These ways are called patterns of organization which are: **time order, space order, and order of importance.**

1. **Time order** is the chronological sequence of events following a natural order so as to direct the reader from one point to the next. It is used when the writer narrates about an event or explains the steps in a process. The supporting sentences in a paragraph are arranged in the order in which they occurred or in which the reader would expect them to occur while making sure that no important point is left out. This pattern is marked by such transitions as ***next, then, the following morning, a few hours later, still later, that Wednesday, by noon, when she was seventeen, before the sun rose, that April* etc.**
2. **Space order,** also called spatial order, is the organization of details through physically locating the element in space. It is the direction that the sentences take in the paragraph in order to move from one area to another. When the writer wishes to report what he sees or to give direction, the movement of the paragraph thus follows the movement of his eyes in a logical or natural progression to help the reader follow and recognize the movement. It enables him/her to visualize what is being described and to create a picture in his mind. The following transitions are used: **from up to bottom, from near to far, from left to right, front/rear, top/down.**
3. **Order of importance** (Sequential order) is a succession of events that are recorded in the order in which they occurred. Typical transitions would include *more important, most difficult, still harder, by far the most expensive, even more damaging, worse yet,*and so on.,

It can be **from** **general to specific**. The most popular order for expository paragraphs is just the reverse of the one above. It begins with a general statement, then moves to particulars which explain, illustrate, or persuade the reader to accept the generalization.

**From specific to general:** in the paragraph, the writer starts with the most specific details and then comes up at the end (inductive) with a general statement e.g.: the topic sentence can be found at the end of a paragraph.

From whole to parts; question to answer; effect to cause, simplest-to-most-complex, familiar to the least familiar, or from the most important to the least important.