

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Language is a system of symbols used by humans as members of a social group to convey themselves through various means, such as speech, hand gestures (signs), or writing. The functions of language cover a wide range of things, including communicating, expressing identity, playing, expressing imagination, and releasing emotions. A number of definitions of language have been proposed by various experts. For example, Henry Sweet, an British linguist, Bernard Bloch and George L, an American linguists revealed that language is a way to convey ideas through combining speech sounds into words, which are then arranged into sentences as a representation of thought. Trager state that language is a system of vocal symbols used arbitrarily by a social group to cooperate. Each short definition contains certain presuppositions and raises various questions. For example, the first definition emphasizes the importance of "thought," while the second uses the term "arbitrarily" in a specific context. Thus, language is a means of communication that is structured through units such as words, word groups, clauses, and sentences, both in oral and written form. Humans use this communication system to convey messages through an organized arrangement of sounds or written representations, forming larger units such as morphemes, words, and sentences. This shows that language is not only a means of communication, but also a complex and well-organized system that allows humans to interact and communicate effectively in

society (Richards & Schmidt, 1985). Amidst the diversity of recognized languages in the world, English stands out as one of the most frequently spoken. In the world of business, technology, and international communication, English has become the predominant language.

In the field of education, English also plays an important role. In this era of globalization, mastery of English is key to opening doors of opportunity and broadening students' horizons. English not only enables access to international educational resources, but also prepares students to be part of an ever-evolving global society. With good English language skills, students can more easily adapt and succeed in diverse academic and professional environments. Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to give sufficient attention to English language learning so that students have strong and relevant skills for an increasingly open and diverse future. It is imperative for students to master not only knowledge but also skills, as they move through the complexities of the modern world. By acquiring knowledge and skills, students will be better equipped to face challenges and thrive in various aspects of life, making positive contributions to society and their own personal growth.

According to Mardiana & Hotimah (Mardiana et al., 2021) & (Hotimah, 2020) Education provides essential knowledge for students through formal curriculum and direct teaching by teachers. Meanwhile, students' skills are often developed through practical experiences and real actions. Through hands-on experiments, participation in extracurricular activities and interaction with the surrounding environment, students can acquire skills that are relevant to the real world. In other words, knowledge is acquired through learning, while skills are

developed through action and direct experience. Moreover, as part of the broader educational landscape, language learning, particularly English language acquisition, is a prime example where students must master four essential skills to achieve proficiency (Ekawati et al., 2023). Based on Permendiknas RI No. 22 of 2006 and also stated by (Febriani & Sya, 2022) the 4 skills are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Alsaleh (Alsaleh, 2020) stated that among the four skills, writing stands out as the most crucial.

In English language learning, writing skills encompass the process of composing written text by adhering to appropriate grammar rules, employing suitable vocabulary, and effectively conveying ideas or information. This process necessitates two primary skills and several essential elements. The first skill involves formulating and organizing ideas, while the second entails constructing sentences proficiently and accurately. To facilitate these skills, various elements are indispensable in writing. According to (Budjalemba & Listyani, 2020), (Wulandari, 2023), and (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2022), these elements include content, grammar, mechanics, organization, and vocabulary. Content in writing is the process of distributing thoughts, ideas that are in our minds through a systematically structured form of writing, so that readers will easily understand the message that will be conveyed by the author. Next is organization, an idea must be conveyed clearly, well-structured, systematic, and cohesive. In good writing, the use of vocabulary must have broad reach and effective expression. Then the use of language or grammatical characteristics leads to effective use. And finally, mechanics require the writer's skills to control the rules, spelling, and use of punctuation. Writing activities engage creative and analytical thinking processes to

plan, organize, and actualize ideas in written form. Among the four key skills in English language learning, EFL students in Indonesia identify writing skills as one of the most challenging due to the differences in writing styles between Indonesian and English ;(Astall et al., 2023; Fajrina et al., 2021)

According to Norbert and Diane Schmitt (Schmitt & Diane, 2015) in their book entitled "Vocabulary in Language Teaching", the writing process requires a broad understanding of vocabulary and knowledge. Despite conducting observations at school and collecting data from English teachers, there are still many students who have difficulty in producing coherent and clear texts. Many students also tend to produce unrelated sentences, causing chaos in their texts. Therefore, to produce effective texts, it is important for writers to organise ideas cohesively so that the meaning conveyed becomes clear. Within English language learning, writing is regarded as a multifaceted process involving various skills, including grammar understanding, vocabulary utilization, text structuring, and effective communication to readers. The writing process progresses through stages such as planning, drafting initial compositions, revision, and final editing, all aimed at meeting communication standards (Partono et al., 2021; Yerly et al., 2024). Writing not only serves as a means of conveying information but also fosters the development of critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills (Wulandari, 2023). Students are encouraged to consider diverse perspectives, construct logical arguments, and articulate ideas persuasively. The constructivist approach to writing, as proposed by Vygotsky and supported by (Sabilla et al., 2023), underscores the importance of students actively engaging in composing texts, applying acquired knowledge, and constructing new understandings through

reflective writing experiences. Moreover, writing in English language learning encompasses various text types, including recount, narrative, descriptive, argumentative, or expository. Each type possesses distinct structures and communicative purposes, necessitating students' understanding of their characteristics and appropriate writing styles for different contexts and audiences.

In addition, after learning procedure paragraphs and description paragraphs, recount paragraphs become one of the most recognised text types and are often encountered by students in English learning (Lestari et al., 2023) states that a recount paragraph is a type of narrative text that aims to retell an event or experience that has occurred in the past. The writer shares a story about the event or experience with the purpose of providing information to the reader about what happened, how it happened, and why it is important or meaningful to the writer or others involved. Writing a recount paragraph is not only about expressing a good idea. As mentioned before, writing recount paragraphs and other types of writing requires two important aspects of combining sentences and ideas to create a strong paragraph unity. These two important aspects are coherence and cohesion.

According to (Halliday, M. A. K., & Hasan, 1976) in their work entitled "Cohesion in English", cohesion in linguistics is a concept that refers to the relationship or interrelationship between various grammatical and semantic elements in a text or discourse. Cohesion includes various ways in which sentences in a text are directly related to each other, such as the use of linking words, reference, word repetition, or the use of synonyms. In this context, cohesion helps maintain the smoothness and clarity of the text, allowing the reader to easily follow the author's train of thought and understand the message being conveyed. Cohesion

also gives the text a coherent structure. Cohesion also plays an important role in the formation of coherence in a text. Cohesion refers to the use of cohesion tools to unify ideas from one sentence to another, or from one paragraph to another. The unity of the text can occur with the use of cohesion tools that unite ideas or ideas from one sentence to another or from one paragraph to another. Thus, coherence is created when the ideas and information conveyed in the text are interrelated and logically arranged, forming a unified whole that can be understood by the reader. Coherence ensures that the ideas presented in a text are organised and easy to follow. Thus, cohesion helps in establishing the relationship between sentences directly, while coherence leads to the overall unity or fluidity of thoughts in the text.

The rhetorical differences in English and Indonesian paragraphs create a gap so that they become the main problem for Indonesian students in learning to write (Arsyad & Ramadhan, 2020). From this, it appears that there are differences related to the way the ideas are selected, arranged, and sequenced in English and Indonesian. This also has an impact on how the coherence of the paragraph is formed. Several researchers who have conducted research related to cohesion and coherence in English paragraphs by Indonesian students. Manullang (Manullang et al., 2023) conducted research that aims to find out the Coherence And Cohesive Device In Writing Recount Text Used By The Fifth Semester Students Of English Department In HKBP Nommensen University. He collected his data through content analysis method and found that the fifth semester students have good ability in writing recount text and using cohesion, especially in the use of reference and conjunction. However, they lack in using coherence in recount texts. Furthermore, research conducted by Priyatmojo (Priyatmojo, 2021a) entitled "Cohesion and

Coherence of Students' Recount Texts in Indonesia" and taking the data involved the use of 15 recount texts from student writing. The texts were organised based on the number of sentences produced by the students and analysed to see the use of cohesive devices as well as text organisation patterns. It was found that overall, most of the texts produced by the students were coherent, although some texts had unrelated sentences that could make the text less coherent. Then, there is research from Ferdanes and Fatimah (Ferdanes & Fatimah, n.d.) entitled "An Analysis of Coherence Use in the Essay Written by English Language and Literature Department Student" using simple random sampling data collection techniques, and it was found that English students in the Essay Writing course were able to integrate coherence in their writing, showing awareness of the importance of coherence. Although the use of key nouns showed their familiarity with the repetition of such words, the relatively low use of pronouns showed a lack of understanding of its role in achieving coherence, perhaps due to an over-focus on the repetition of key nouns. And finally, there is research from Riswanto (Riswanto, 2021) entitled "Cohesion and coherence of EFL students' essay writing" collecting data through documentation and the sampling technique used is purposive sampling. The results showed that although some types of reference, conjunction, and reiteration had been used by students, there was still a limited variety in the types used. This suggests that students need to learn more about the different types of cohesion and coherence that can be used in writing.

In Indonesia, the discussion on paragraph coherence remains a significant topic, especially in exploring the differences between coherence in Indonesian and English paragraphs which is an important aspect that needs to be investigated

further. Moreover, in the context of education, research on coherence and cohesion in students' and university students' writing is still lacking.

Based on these problems, the study of paragraph coherence or writing done in Indonesia is still an important issue. The main thing to be researched is what and how coherence differs between correct Indonesian and English paragraphs. In addition, not so much research has been done on how paragraph coherence is well-crafted by students. Of these two things, the second thing will be the focus of this research. The author would like to conduct a research entitled "Coherence and Cohesion : An Analysis of Recount Paragraphs Written by the Eighth-Grade Students of SMP Negeri 1 Sukasada Academic Year 2023/2024". The researcher chose Singaraja city as the research location because based on the ranking of the best schools in Bali according to Kemdikbud, Singaraja is in a lower position compared to schools in Gianyar, Denpasar, and Badung. SMP Negeri 1 Sukasada was chosen because it is a favourite junior secondary school in the Sukasada area with high accreditation scores. Choosing this school can provide representative insight into how students in that area write recount paragraphs. As one of the state schools in the area, SMPN 1 Sukasada may have educational standards similar to other schools in the area, so the data obtained can be more easily generalized to a wider population. The level chosen was grade 8, because grade 8 students are usually around 13-14 years old, where they are at a stage of cognitive development that allows them to become more proficient in writing and critical thinking. At this age, their writing skills are developing, making them suitable subjects for writing analysis such as recount paragraphs.

At SMPN 1 Sukasada, the school has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum for grades 7 and 8. This curriculum provides flexibility for students to explore their interests and talents in more depth, and encourages learning that is more contextual and relevant to everyday life. One of the materials taught in this curriculum in grade 8 is recount writing. Recount material in class 8 aims to develop students' abilities in writing and retelling experiences or events with good structure and appropriate use of language. The expected learning outcomes from recount material include students' ability to compose coherent, logical and clear paragraphs. Students are expected to be able to identify and apply elements of cohesion and coherence in their writing. Cohesion in writing means using appropriate conjunctions and consistent references to ensure relationships between sentences are clear and easy to follow. Meanwhile, coherence refers to an orderly and logical flow of thoughts, so that each part of the writing is well connected and supports the main idea.

Thus, this study will identify how the level of coherence of students' recount paragraphs and to answer the research objectives, the researcher will elaborate the forms of cohesion tools that become the basis for the formation of coherence.

1.2 Problem Identification

At SMPN 1 SUKASADA, there are significant challenges related to the ability of eighth-grade students to write coherent and cohesive recount paragraphs. Despite receiving sufficient education during the English learning process, students still face difficulties in maintaining cohesion and coherence in their writing. They often struggle to develop a logical storyline and maintain unity and clarity of meaning in their writing. The primary challenge is explaining the topic sentence or

main idea in a paragraph. Many eighth-grade students struggle with this, resulting in incoherent paragraphs (Stevens E. A et al., 2020). Cohesion in writing is closely related to coherence, which is necessary to maintain paragraph unity. In learning English, eighth grade students at SMPN 1 SUKASADA still face difficulties in understanding the concept of coherence as a whole. Coherence is the key to forming meaning in writing. Therefore, a deeper understanding of this concept is needed so that students can produce more coherent and meaningful writing. Additionally, the importance of the concept of cohesion should not be ignored. Cohesion is a crucial element in creating meaning within a paragraph. However, students' understanding of this concept is often limited, which can affect their ability to write coherent and meaningful paragraphs.

1.3 Research Question

The research question formulated by relating to the background of the study, as follows:

1. How is the coherence in the Recount Paragraphs of eighth-grade students at SMP N 1 Sukasada?
2. What types of cohesion are used by eighth-grade students at SMP N 1 Sukasada in their Recount Paragraphs?

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Based on the research problems above, the purposes of the study are :

1. To assess the students' competence in producing coherence in their Recount Paragraphs writing, and
2. To identify the types of cohesion used by 8th-grade students at SMP N 1 Sukasada in their recount paragraphs.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study will focus on analyzing coherence in recount paragraphs written by students. The scope of the research includes evaluating the overall level of coherence in students' writing. The subject of this research will be limited to only one class and written by eighth-grade students from SMPN 1 Sukasada.

1.6 Significances of the Study

This significance of this study contained how this study would contribute the theoretical and practical aspects as it is presented in the section above.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significances

This study is expected to be able to contribute and insights regarding the coherence of how texts can be structured more effectively so that they are easier to understand, both in the context of daily communication, the learning process, or the production of literary works and scientific writing. Apart from that, this research provides an overview of what the elements of coherence are and how the meaning of the coherence elements contained in one paragraph relates to other paragraphs.

A recount paragraph is a paragraph that is factual. Apart from being factual, recount paragraphs are also imaginative and illusive. In this context, the recount paragraph is not based on events that actually happened, but is the result of an invention created by the author. In this case, recount paragraphs are more fictional in nature. According to Flower and Hayes in their book entitled “A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing” (Flower & Hayes, 1981) states that a clear goal will guide and shape a person in their efforts to write good writing. Thus, practicing writing is something that must be done through writing a free paragraph or it can also be based on a certain theme or topic (Lucinda McKnight, 2021). It is hoped that this research can provide further explanation regarding how to create a paragraph, one of which is a recount paragraph which contains elements of coherence in each paragraph that can be analyzed. In addition, it is hoped that this research can add a deeper understanding regarding the importance of instilling a writing culture in students.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

In this chapter, the practical significance of this study in the context of learning and knowledge development will be elaborated. Practically, the findings not only provide new insights into coherence in Grade 8 students' recount paragraphs, but also bring concrete benefits to four main groups: teachers, EFL students, society and for future research.

1.6.2.1 For the Teachers

It is hoped that the results of this research can contribute to teachers and prospective teachers in instilling a writing culture in their students by using recount paragraphs as a learning medium. Then, the learning strategy becomes more

effective by using recount paragraphs as a learning medium, teachers can use a more structured approach in teaching writing skills to students. Apart from that, teaching students how to write good paragraphs will also help teachers understand the stages of writing better. This includes understanding the difficulties students may face and how to overcome them. Therefore, this will certainly help improve the effectiveness of students' learning and writing skills.

1.6.2.2 For the Students

The results of this study are expected to contribute to EFL students' understanding of the integration of meaning in each paragraph using recount paragraphs as a learning medium. This is because these paragraphs contain implicit messages that are useful for students' lives, especially in developing their personal and educational skills. By practicing writing recount paragraphs, students will have a good understanding of the paragraph structure which consists of introduction, sequence of events, and conclusion. This will help students understand how written paragraphs are organized. It also develops students' creativity in writing recount paragraphs, both in terms of designing the story and the writing style. By doing so, students will understand the elements of coherence contained in recount paragraphs, such as repetition, pronouns, and elements of addition. This research is expected to develop students' understanding in making coherent and meaningful paragraphs through the writing of recount paragraphs.

1.6.2.3 For The Society

The results of this study are expected to provide useful contributions to people who have an interest in making free paragraphs. Paragraphs that are able to attract human imagination are very useful written works in various fields of literature, education, and science (Nafi'ah, 2018: 93). By continuing to practice writing about free-form paragraphs, they can increase their imagination so that it can open the gates to the world of fantasy, help them understand and master the real world more deeply, and foster creativity and potential that is latent in them. In addition, it can develop people's communication skills. By practicing paragraph writing, people can learn to organize their ideas more clearly and structurally. This ability will be useful for both written and oral communication aspects. Thus, writing that is able to influence people's imagination has an important value, especially in their individual development.

1.6.2.4 For Future Research

This research is expected to provide information and references for other researchers who want to conduct research on coherence analysis in another paragraph. In addition, other researchers are expected to understand clearly about the analysis of recount paragraph through this research. Also other researchers can get information and ideas regarding paragraph analysis in discourse by reading and understanding this research. Other researchers who want to conduct linguistic studies, especially on paragraph, can obtain information as well as know the process of analyzing coherence elements in recount paragraph through this research. Thus,

this research is expected to help other researchers to obtain detailed information about paragraph analysis in developing their future research ideas.

