

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Research Background

Nowadays, English is one of the most important languages taught in various schools, especially in Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is not only considered an additional skill but is also included as a core subject in the national curriculum. The influence of globalization has accelerated the development of English teaching in recent years, making English an international language that must be mastered (Wulandari et al., 2020). In the process of learning English, there are four main skills that students must master: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these four skills, writing is one of the most essential (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). Writing skills are needed not only to meet academic requirements but also to prepare students for the workforce (Durga & Rao, 2018).

Writing serves as a medium to express ideas, thoughts, and emotions through written communication, in addition to oral expression. Written communication can take various forms, including notes, letters, and other types of texts. Handayani et al. (2013) stated that through writing activities, individuals can convey ideas and information to readers. In line with this, Phelps (2014) explains that writing is a process in which the writer processes, interprets, and evaluates information, then organizes it logically, coherently, and structurally so that the reader can clearly understand the message. In practice, writing involves several stages, such as determining a topic, gathering supporting information, grouping ideas, organizing them logically, and using appropriate language structures (Subawa et al., 2017). Furthermore, Gie (1992) argues that writing is a comprehensive process through

which individuals express and communicate their ideas to readers via written language to ensure understanding. Therefore, writing skills in English not only reflect language proficiency but also help in structuring ideas and delivering messages clearly and effectively.

To achieve the purpose of writing, writers must master writing skills in order to organize their texts systematically and meaningfully. According to (Wiguna et al., 2019), to produce understandable writing, writers must be able to construct well-organized and structured texts. In this regard, there are two key aspects to consider in writing: first, the ability to compose sentences correctly, and second, the ability to formulate and organize ideas effectively. For instance, a writer must have a clear topic or argument. The arrangement of ideas must maintain a logical flow and continuity. In other words, the context and situation of the text must be coherent (Wahyuni & Syamsudin, 2021). Coherence is recognized as one of the hallmarks of well-written texts and is crucial in writing.

In writing, coherence refers to how all sentences in a text are connected and logically arranged (Oshima & Hogue, 1998). In other words, coherence ensures that the ideas in a piece of writing are clearly expressed, organized, and interconnected, allowing readers to follow the writer's train of thought easily. Butt (1995) similarly states that the coherence of a text is evident through the relationship between the context, situation, and ideas presented. This means a coherent text not only presents relevant ideas but also unites them harmoniously to create a cohesive meaning. According to (Suwandi, 2016), coherence refers to the unity within a text where every sentence and paragraph is organized and integrated into a whole. Hence, coherence is

a vital aspect of writing because it enhances the quality of a text and makes it easier for readers to grasp the intended message.

Along with coherence, cohesion is another essential element in effective writing. In this context, cohesion refers to how different parts of a text are connected using linguistic elements. Halliday and Hasan (1976) describe cohesion as a semantic relationship that links elements in a discourse, ensuring the text forms a unified whole. According to their theory, cohesion involves various devices such as reference, Substitute, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. These devices function within the textual system of language and operate at both grammatical and semantic levels. Without cohesion, even logically connected ideas can appear disjointed. This highlights the fact that coherence must go hand in hand with cohesion. According to (Anom et al., 2013), cohesion and coherence are two vital components of writing skills that play a crucial role in determining the quality of a text.

Several studies have been conducted on coherence and cohesion in English writing. (Gunas, 2020) analyzed these aspects in descriptive and narrative texts written by high school students in the Langke Rembong District. A total of 390 students from thirteen schools participated in the study. The results of the quantitative analysis showed that most students still struggled with using cohesion and coherence effectively. Another study by (Leli, 2020) examined cohesion and coherence in students of the English Education Study Program at IAIN Bukittinggi. It found that many students were unable to express ideas and grammar fluently and accurately, which was attributed to a lack of motivation, limited learning hours, and inadequate prior knowledge of English. (Putra et al., 2022) also conducted a study on coherence and cohesion at SMA N 3 Paraya. Their findings indicated that students were fairly

capable of writing cohesively and coherently. In a separate study, (Nur Rahman et al., 2021) examined students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar and found that most students used only a limited range of cohesive devices. They also found that 41% of students had good writing skills, 33% were very good, and others still encountered difficulties.

Based on previous research, it can be concluded that students' understanding of cohesion and coherence in writing is still relatively low. This shows that teachers play a very important role in guiding students to write better. The differences in grammatical structure between Indonesian and English are also one of the main reasons students experience difficulties in writing. As stated by (Rahayu, 2015), most Indonesian students experience obstacles in understanding English, both verbally and in writing, due to fundamental differences in grammatical structure.

Based on preliminary survey of 11th grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak also show similar challenges. They have not yet fully mastered grammar and have limited vocabulary. In addition, their low motivation to learn English also affects their awareness of the importance of producing good writing. This situation underscores the need for special attention in evaluating students' writing skills, particularly in terms of cohesion and coherence. This is important because cohesion and coherence are two key elements that greatly determine the quality of a piece of writing. As stated by (Seken and Suarnajaya, 2013), cohesion and coherence are key elements in writing that serve as primary indicators of writing quality.

Related to that, the researcher is interested in conducting a study titled 'Coherence and Cohesion: An Analysis of Descriptive Paragraphs Written by the Eleventh-Grade Students of SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak' to explore and explain the

coherence and cohesion found in students' writing, especially among eleventh-grade students. Gerokgak was chosen as the research site because it is located in a suburban area of Singaraja City, which has different characteristics from schools in urban areas, particularly in terms of lower learning motivation and limited exposure to English. According to the 2024 *UTBK* rankings released by the *Kemendikbud*, no schools in the Gerokgak sub-district made it into the top 1,000 schools nationally, unlike schools in cities such as Denpasar, Badung, Gianyar, or Singaraja. SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak was selected because it is one of the most well-known public high schools in the area. Moreover, no previous research has specifically focused on this topic at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak. The eleventh grade was chosen because students at this level have already been introduced to various text types, such as descriptive, narrative, argumentative, and explanatory texts. From preliminary observations, data on descriptive writing were available, and students showed their best performance when producing descriptive texts. Therefore, this study focuses on descriptive texts to evaluate the extent of student's ability to produce cohesive and coherent writing.

The findings of this study will also provide insights into students' writing abilities. The purpose of this research is to analyze the texts written by eleventh-grade students, particularly in terms of how well they demonstrate coherence and cohesion, as well as the challenges they face in achieving these elements. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of writing instruction is to help students develop the ability to produce quality texts. To achieve this, a written text must exhibit both coherence and cohesion.

I.2 Problem Identification

The ability to write in English is one of the essential skills that students must master, especially in academic contexts. In practice, good writing skills are not only

determined by the use of proper grammar and vocabulary, but also by the ability to organize ideas coherently and logically through the aspects of cohesion and coherence. However, based on the results of several previous studies, it has been found that most students still have difficulty in composing cohesive and coherent paragraphs. Although some students show positive results, in general, these abilities are inconsistent and still require more attention.

This condition indicates that students need a deeper understanding of how to compose well-structured and effective writing. At SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak, which is the location of this study, several challenges have also been identified that contribute to the low quality of students' writing skills. The main contributing factor is students' low interest in learning English, which directly affects their weak understanding of grammar, the use of tenses, and techniques for organizing ideas logically and systematically. In addition, the difference in writing structure between Indonesian and English presents an additional challenge. Most Indonesian students struggle to understand English, both in spoken and written forms, mainly due to significant differences in grammatical structure (Rahayu, 2015).

In addition, there is no research that specifically discusses aspects of cohesion and coherence in student writing at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak. This shows that there is a gap that needs to be filled in academic studies, especially related to students' writing ability in building cohesive and structured paragraphs. Based on these conditions, it is important to conduct this research to examine more deeply the writing ability of grade XI students in composing cohesive and coherent descriptive paragraphs. In addition, this study also aims to identify the types of cohesion used by students as well as the various challenges they face during the writing process,

so that the results can be valuable input for the development of writing learning in schools.

I.3 Research Questions

Based on the background that has been described, the research questions are as follows:

1. How is the coherence of descriptive paragraphs of eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak?
2. What types of cohesion are used in the descriptive paragraphs of eleventh grade students of SMA negeri 2 Gerokgak?

I.4 Research Objective

Based on the research questions that have been raised, this research has two objectives as follows:

1. To find out the coherence in descriptive paragraphs at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak, especially in eleventh grade students.
2. To analyze what types of cohesion are used by eleventh grade students at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak in writing descriptive paragraphs.

I.5 Limitation of The Research

This study has several limitations. First, this study only focused on grade XI students at SMA Negeri 2 Gerokgak, so the findings cannot be generalized to all high school students in other regions. Second, the type of text analyzed is limited to descriptive paragraphs, so it does not include other types of text such as narrative, expository, or argumentative. Third, the analysis only focused on the coherence and cohesion aspects in students' writing. In addition, the student writing data analyzed

came from assignments given by the teacher in the learning process, so the quality of writing could be influenced by the learning conditions at that time.

1.6 Significances of the Research

1.6.1 Theoretical Significant

The results of this research are expected to contribute to the field of English writing studies, particularly in the area of constructing cohesive and coherent paragraphs. This study may also serve as a valuable reference for future research and support efforts to enhance students' skills in producing well-organized, logically connected, and meaningful written texts.

1.6.2 Practical Significances

a. For the Teachers

The findings of this study are expected to help teachers in guiding students to better understand the concepts of coherence and cohesion in writing. Thus, students can compose writing that has a clear integration of ideas and interrelationships between parts, so that the resulting text is more structured and easy to understand.

b. For the Students

This research is expected to help students better understand the importance of coherence in writing, especially in English texts. By understanding how ideas should be logically connected, students can gradually improve their ability to produce well-structured and meaningful writing.

c. For Future Research

This study can be a useful reference for future researchers, especially those focusing on the field of linguistics or English education. This study provides a basis

for developing more in-depth research related to coherence and cohesion in student writing. In addition, the results of this study can also be the basis for developing more appropriate teaching strategies in improving coherence and cohesion skills in students' writing.

