

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research

Language is the primary means by which humans convey thoughts, feelings, and information to others. In the world of education, language plays a crucial role as both a means of communication and a medium for developing critical and logical thinking skills. One of the languages that has a strategic role in modern education is English. This is because English is the primary language in many countries worldwide. English is considered a universal language because it is the most widely spoken language in numerous countries worldwide (Intan Cahyani Trinita et al., 2024). In addition, according to Ilyosovna (2024) English is very important because it is one of the most widely spoken languages throughout the world. With its increasingly vital role, mastery of English is a skill that students need to face global challenges. In Indonesia, English subjects are currently taught from elementary school to junior and senior high school, as stipulated in Permendikbudristek Number 12 of 2024, as part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In learning English, there are four main skills that students must master: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among the four skills, writing is one of the most important (Ratminingsih et al., 2018). Writing is one of the skills used to convey ideas, information, and feelings. According to Alisha as cited in Widyasari (2022) through writing, we can turn thoughts, ideas, information, and opinions into a form of writing that can be accessed and utilized by others, so that the message conveyed becomes clearer, more effective, and meaningful. Writing is not a short process because it involves many skills, such as the ability to think critically and organize ideas logically (Seken & Suarnajaya, 2013). The writing process involves several stages, starting from

topic selection, collecting supporting information, grouping ideas, organizing ideas logically, and using the right language structure so that the writing becomes clear, directed, and easy for readers to understand (Subawa et al., 2017).

In writing practice, one of the most common forms of output is text. A text is an arrangement of words or sentences that are consciously created to convey certain information, ideas, or messages to the reader. Text is not something that is formed naturally. The text is made intentionally and contains a certain amount of information in written form Lestari (2023). In the text, there are phrases and language structures that must be understood in order for the message to be received properly. Examples can be found in essays, textbooks, or press releases, where information is often only conveyed directly. In fact, the text will become more interesting and effective if it is organized using the right phrases and grammar (Hemetsberger et al., 2021). In addition, a good text needs to exhibit language cohesiveness, including word choice, sentence structure, and cohesive relationships between its parts (Arifin & Farida, 2020). That way, readers can understand the content of the writing more clearly. The text itself can be understood as a series of paragraphs that form a unified meaning.

Therefore, for a writing or text to have a complete meaning and be easily understood, it is necessary to pay attention to both the technical aspects of writing and the aspects of coherence and cohesion. Coherence and cohesion play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of writing (Anom et al., 2013). In addition, according to Halliday & Hasan (1975), for the text to be clear and meaningful, the writing process requires aspects of coherence and cohesion. Coherence refers to the regularity of thought flow in a text, ensuring that each sentence and paragraph is logically arranged and connected to the others in meaning. According to Anjulo Alaro (2020) coherence is a very important aspect of writing, especially in English, because it relates to the logical

connection and consistency between parts of the text that makes the writing well understood and in accordance with the expectations of the reader.

Meanwhile, cohesion refers to the attachment between parts of the text through the use of linguistic elements such as conjunctions, references, or appropriate repetition. By applying coherence and cohesion well, the writing will feel more flowing, structured, and easier to understand for the reader. Cohesiveness is known as a crucial and significant aspect of writing. Cohesiveness is defined as how well the parts of the text are interrelated to form a clear writing (Ali, 2021). Meanwhile, according to Halliday & Hasan (1975) cohesion is a language device that functions to connect elements in the text, making them interrelated and forming a unified and cohesive meaning. Coherence and cohesion have complementary roles in creating writing that is intact and easily understood by readers. According to Anom (2013) the quality of a writing can be seen from the extent to which the writing applies the elements of cohesion and coherence, because both are the main elements in creating effective writing.

Some students still struggle with writing coherent English texts, particularly in maintaining coherence and cohesion between sentences. Learning and writing in English is often considered more challenging than in Indonesian because, in addition to understanding the meaning, students must also be able to pronounce and write words or sentences according to English rules. This difficulty often leads to a decline in students' interest in learning English (Akmalia et al., 2022). In practice, many students struggle to logically link ideas between sentences, resulting in writing that is disjointed and difficult to understand. Problems that often arise include the incompatibility of explanatory sentences with the main idea, the use of inappropriate conjunctions, and the lack of awareness in keeping the flow of ideas intact from the beginning to the end of the paragraph. This indicates that the aspects of coherence and cohesion in writing remain a significant challenge for some students.

Some researchers have analyzed and measured aspects of cohesion and coherence in English, especially in writing skills. Research by Citra & Maheswari (2024) showed that the majority of SMP Negeri 1 Sukasada students were able to write descriptive paragraphs with good coherence and cohesion. Of the 20 paragraphs analyzed, 17 paragraphs were in the good category, while only 3 paragraphs (15%) still needed to be improved. This result indicates that most students already possess fairly reliable writing skills in this aspect, although teacher guidance is still necessary for those who are still struggling. Then, Wahyuni & Syamsudin (2021) found that research on high school students in Cirebon who wrote descriptive paragraphs revealed that 76% of students demonstrated a good level of coherence, 19% showed a sufficient level, 2% lacked coherence, and 3% exhibited a poor level. This data was obtained by analyzing descriptive texts from 46 students. These results illustrate that the majority of students have been able to write paragraphs with a clear and coherent idea structure, although a small portion still needs improvement.

Meanwhile, research by Lestari (2023) on 20 grade X students of MAN 2 Jember found that students used more grammatical cohesion than lexical cohesion in writing recount texts. However, many of them still do not fully understand the types of cohesion and have not used them appropriately. Another study by Anjulo Alaro (2020) on 30 descriptive and narrative essays of grade XI students at Sodo Preparatory School showed that although students can use some aspects of cohesion such as reference, substitution, and conjunction, they still often make mistakes in grammar, conjunctions, vocabulary, and language expressions. And then, research by Gunas (2020) on students of SMA Negeri 13 Langke Lembong reveals that, in writing descriptive and narrative texts, cohesion and coherence are not being applied optimally. In the cohesion aspect, the substitution and ellipsis aspects scored 0, and 60 in reference and conjunction. Interviews show that 90% of students focus more on reading skills than on writing, which causes their writing skills to develop suboptimally.

Based on the results of previous research, it is known that some students have been able to write coherently and cohesively. However, it is still found that some students still experience difficulties. This indicates that the study of coherence and cohesion remains relevant for further research, particularly in Indonesia, where research specifically highlighting this aspect in English writing is still limited. While prior studies have addressed coherence and cohesion, most have focused on descriptive texts rather than narrative texts. Additionally, differences exist in the subjects and contexts examined. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by analyzing coherence and cohesion in narrative text writing among Indonesian students, providing insights that have not been explored in earlier research.

The Researcher is interested in conducting research to describe the level of paragraph coherence and analyze the use of cohesion in the context of paragraph formation written by XI grade students at SMA N 4 Singaraja. Through a systematic approach, this study is expected to provide three main benefits, namely helping to develop students' writing skills, providing comprehensive evaluation materials for teachers, and serving as a reference for further linguistic research. This study has its own advantages because it focuses on the analysis of paragraph coherence and cohesion in a specific context, namely at SMA N 4 Singaraja students. This allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of students' writing abilities at the senior high school level. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide a clear picture of students' abilities in composing coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the preliminary analysis of students' narrative paragraph writing at SMA N 4 Singaraja, several problems were identified. The students' narrative paragraphs show that many of them still have difficulties in achieving proper coherence. The ideas in their paragraphs are

often not well organized, and the sequence of events is sometimes unclear, causing the text to be difficult to understand. Although some students are able to write grammatically correct sentences, the logical connection between sentences is still weak.

In terms of cohesion, the use of cohesive devices in students' narrative paragraphs is still limited and frequently inappropriate. Most students tend to overuse simple conjunctions such as and, then, and so, while other types of cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and lexical cohesion are rarely used. In several paragraphs, the misuse or absence of cohesive devices results in disconnected sentences and reduces the overall quality of the writing.

Furthermore, the analysis of students' tasks indicates that the students focus more on constructing individual sentences rather than building a unified and meaningful paragraph. This condition shows that students have not fully understood how to create a cohesive and coherent narrative paragraph. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of coherence and cohesion in students' narrative paragraphs at SMA N 4 Singaraja is necessary in order to identify the types of problems and provide useful input for improving the teaching and learning process of writing.

1.3 Research Question

Based on the explanation above, the problems of this study can be formulated as follows:

1. How is the coherence of paragraphs of grade XI students at SMA N 4 Singaraja in the academic year 2024/2025?
2. What types of cohesion paragraphs of grade XI students at SMA N 4 Singaraja in the academic year 2024/2025?

1.4 Research Objectives

According to the explanation above, there are several important research objectives, such as:

1. To determine the extent to which the students of grade XI of SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja are able to write narrative paragraphs coherently.
2. To identify the types of cohesion devices used by grade XI students of SMA Negeri 4 Singaraja in writing narrative paragraphs.

1.5 Scope of the Research

This study analyzes the coherence and cohesion in narrative paragraphs written by XI grade students at SMA N 4 Singaraja, with a specific focus on English lessons. The research will evaluate how logically ideas flow and whether the paragraphs are easy to understand. It will also identify and categorize the cohesive devices used by students, such as conjunctions, to see how effectively they link sentences and ideas together.

1.6 Urgency of the Research

The urgency of this research stems from its potential to offer valuable insights into the writing proficiency of XI grade students at SMA N 4 Singaraja, specifically concerning coherence and cohesion in their narrative paragraphs. The findings of this study will provide a clear overview of the quality of these students' paragraphs from the perspective of coherence, which is considered a primary indicator of paragraph quality. This information is crucial because it can serve as direct input for improving the writing-learning process at the school. By understanding the current state of coherence and cohesion in student writing, educators can identify specific areas where students struggle and consequently develop more targeted and effective teaching strategies to enhance their writing skills.

1.7 Significances of the Research

1.7.1 Theoretical Significance

This study enriches the theoretical understanding of coherence and cohesion within narrative discourse, particularly as manifested in the writing of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the senior high school level. By investigating the employment of cohesive devices and the establishment of coherent meaning in narrative paragraphs, the research provides empirical data that can either corroborate or extend established linguistic theories, such as those proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1975) regarding grammatical and lexical cohesion. The analysis of student writing offers insights into how semantic relationships are constructed and how different cohesive ties contribute to the overall texture of a text, thereby deepening the scholarly comprehension of these fundamental aspects of written communication.

1.7.2 Practical Significance

1.7.2.1 For Teachers

The findings will furnish English teachers at SMA N 4 Singaraja with a data-driven understanding of their 11th-grade students' current proficiency in crafting coherent and cohesive narrative texts. This diagnostic insight is crucial for identifying specific areas of difficulty in students' writing—be it in the application of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions, or lexical cohesion, or in the logical progression of ideas that underpins coherence. Armed with this knowledge, teachers can then refine their pedagogical approaches, develop targeted interventions, and design more effective instructional materials and writing assignments that directly address students' needs, ultimately enhancing the quality of writing instruction.

1.7.2.2 For Students

By shedding light on the common challenges associated with coherence and cohesion, this research implicitly provides students with a clearer roadmap for improving their writing skills. Awareness of how these linguistic features contribute to the clarity and effectiveness of their narrative paragraphs can empower students to self-monitor and revise their work more critically, fostering greater independence and proficiency in written English.

1.7.2.3 For Future Research

This study establishes a foundational empirical basis for subsequent investigations into the complexities of coherence and cohesion in EFL contexts. It can stimulate further research inquiries, such as comparative studies across different text genres or proficiency levels, longitudinal studies tracking student development in writing, or experimental studies evaluating the efficacy of various instructional interventions aimed at improving textual coherence and cohesion. The mixed-method design employed in this research also provides a methodological framework that future scholars can adapt and build upon.

