

## COHERENCE AND COHESION: AN ANALYSIS OF DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH WRITTEN BY THE ELEVENTH-GRADE STUDENTS OF SMA NEGERI 1 SINGARAJA ACADEMIC YEAR 2024/2025

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the aspects of cohesion and coherence in paragraphs written by 11th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. These two elements are important for presenting information clearly and in an organized way. This research uses a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The sample was chosen using cluster random sampling with a lottery system, and eleventh-grade B was selected. Students' writing was analyzed using both approaches to assess their ability to organize ideas effectively. The results show that students can write coherent descriptive paragraphs and use cohesive devices correctly to connect ideas smoothly. However, some students still struggle to maintain consistency and logical flow in their writing. These findings highlight the need for teachers to emphasize the importance of cohesion and coherence in writing. By understanding and applying these concepts correctly, students can produce well-structured and effective texts. Therefore, writing instruction that focuses on these aspects is expected to improve the overall quality of students' work.*

*Keywords: Coherence, Cohesion, and Descriptive Paragraph*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the four fundamental skill that all people need to have is writing. Writing can be a useful for conveying ideas, thoughts, and feelings in addition to direct speech such written communication include notes and letters. According to Prilasanti (2014) writing is a process of delivering ideas. Additionally, Phelps (2014) clarifies that writing is the process of the author processing, interpreting, and assessing information and organizing it logically, coherently, and well-responded to. Therefore, a written work has a specific goal or meaning. The reader can

comprehend the goal or message of a given communication if the Writing is clear, logical, and easy to understand.

The connection of ideas in a piece of writing is very important to form a strong unity of meaning. Each sentence develops logically and supports the main idea of the paragraph showing the organization of the written work. Paragraphs must always have sentences that are close and coherence with the previous or following sentences. Chin and Huh (2019) said that in a sentence there are two types of sentence attachment. The first is the attachment of meaning between one sentence and another sentence called coherence, and the second attachment is the attachment or degree of form between sentences called cohesion. Coherence and cohesion are closely related, in fact for coherence to occur, there needs to be cohesion (Reinhart, 1980; Rushan, 2021). Coherence and cohesion are two important elements that form the relationship between ideas and sentences.

Coherence is defined as the harmony of concepts in text and the logic of ideas in discourse. Orderliness, neatness regarding the meaning or content of sentences in discourse is known as coherence within the context of the discourse (Tarigan, 2009, p. 29). Coherence terms make it easier to read and understand because they help us understand the coherence or consistency between its components. Whereas cohesion in paragraph writing refers to how the sentences in a paragraph connect to each other smoothly and logically, creating a clear flow that is easy for readers to understand. Cohesion helps readers follow the author's ideas without confusion, making the text more effective and enjoyable to read. Cohesion markers as markers of form relationships are divided into two large groups, namely grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion (Tarigan, 2009, p. 98-99). According to Brown (2021, p. 316) which emphasizes that there is a relationship between paragraphs and the integration between units in the text. Therefore, coherence and cohesion are important discursive components for producing good written work. For some students, writing cohesive and coherence texts is not easy. Students often produce incoherence writing. It was found that students face obstacles in producing good writing because of the students using cohesive devices that are not appropriate. They also have difficulty when organizing their ideas.

A number of researchers have conducted research related to coherence in English texts by Indonesian learners. Purwono (2018) conducted a study of cohesion and coherence in the paragraph writing of grade XI students at SMA Negeri 3 Purworejo by describing markers of cohesion between sentences and the meaning of coherence in students' essays. The results of this research found that most of the students' writing was low in terms of using clear and objective language and could be said to be incoherent due to poor relations among ideas. Beside, Telaumbanua, Ritonga, Tarigan and Hutabarat (2019) which examines the coherence and cohesion in the paragraphs of grade XI students at SMA YPN Marisi

Medan. It was found that around 30 students' explanatory texts used grammatical cohesion markers, namely references, substitutions and conjunctions, but only a few students used lexical cohesion markers, namely repetition and synonyms. In addition, researchers found that many students were unable to write paragraphs well because they lacked an understanding of good writing techniques which are shown in the results of their writing. Students use the wrong cohesive device due to difficulty organizing their ideas. Then, Putra, Samudra and Susanti (2022) utilized descriptive qualitative methods to analyze the impact of cohesion and coherence on students' narrative text writing in SMAN 4 Praya. The research results show that students do not use generic narrative structures coherently and their paragraph writing level is still low. There are still many sentences that are not arranged together, so they are less able to form good text.

From the previous research above, it can be concluded that the level of students' understanding of the use of cohesion and coherence is still at a low average level and teachers must be competent in distributing students' writing. It can be assumed that there is a need for research on this topic. There are not many studies that have been carried out regarding how text coherence is formed by students, especially at the high school level, is still rarely conducted. Another reason to explore this topic further is the increasing importance of effective writing skills in academic and professional contexts.

The researcher will study the coherence of paragraph texts among eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja for the 2024/2025 academic year, a top high school in Buleleng Regency with 350 grade XI students, ensuring a representative sample and strong academic achievements. The results of this research will also reflect students' ability to write a paragraph. The aim of this research is to look at the texts written by eleventh-grade students in terms of integration, coherence and problems that may arise in creating these two aspects in their writing. Furthermore, the main focus of teaching writing is developing competence in creating good writing. To achieve good writing, the text must be coherence and cohesive.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research design used a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. This combination was chosen to answer the first research question, which focused on describing how coherence is built in the students' paragraphs. The qualitative method helped examine how ideas are connected in the paragraphs, while the quantitative method was used to find patterns and count how often coherence features appeared. For the second research question, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the cohesion found in the text. The study calculated how often different cohesion links

appeared and created a percentage to show this. The data was then analyzed through basic numerical calculations, which made it easier to understand how students used cohesion in their writing. By using both methods together, the study provided a more complete and detailed look at both coherence and cohesion in the students' paragraphs.

Mixed method research combines quantitative and qualitative data in a single study (Bergman, 2011). According to Hashemi and Babaii (2013), it includes both types of data at all research stages. Quantitative research analyzes numerical data to describe a phenomenon, while descriptive qualitative research uses non-numerical data to interpret participants' experiences. Both methods provide statistical descriptions and inferences. This study examines cohesion markers and coherence in eleventh-grade students' descriptive paragraphs at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja. The data was collected through a student paragraph writing test.

The data was collected using a student test paragraph method. Before collecting data, the researchers observed and reviewed students' texts. A descriptive test was chosen as it best measured coherence and integration in writing. Using cluster random sampling, 35 students from eleventh grade B were selected from a population of 350 students across 11 classes. The researcher obtained permission from the teacher and explained the writing task before conducting the test. The results were analyzed using a table coherence rubric and frequency cohesion marker. The rubric assessed coherence in students' descriptive writing, while the frequency table was created to record the frequency of students' descriptive writing. These instruments are essential for understanding student behavior and coherence in descriptive writing.

**Table 3.2 Coherence Rubric for Descriptive Text**

| No | Criteria  | 1<br>(Low) | 2<br>(Below<br>Average) | 3<br>(Average) | 4<br>(Above<br>Average) | 5<br>(High) |
|----|---|------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | <b>Clarity, Relevance, and Accuracy of Sentences</b>              |            |                         |                |                         |             |
|    | Topic Sentence  |            |                         |                |                         |             |
|    | Supporting Sentence   |            |                         |                |                         |             |
|    | Conclusion  |            |                         |                |                         |             |
| 2. | <b>Relationship between Writing Purpose, Diction, and Content</b> |            |                         |                |                         |             |
|    | Writing Purpose   |            |                         |                |                         |             |
|    | Diction   |            |                         |                |                         |             |
| 3  | <b>Appropriateness of Information</b>                             |            |                         |                |                         |             |

**Table 3.4 Frequency Table of Cohesion Type**

| No.      |   | Bentuk Relasi Kohesif  | Frekuensi | Persentase |
|----------|---|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>1</b> |   | References             |           |            |
| 1        | 1 | Exophoric              |           |            |
| 1        | 2 | Endophoric             |           |            |
|          |   | Anaphoric              |           |            |
|          |   | Cataphoric             |           |            |
| <b>2</b> |   | Substitute             |           |            |
| 2        | 1 | Nominal                |           |            |
| 2        | 2 | Verbal                 |           |            |
| 2        | 3 | Clausal                |           |            |
| <b>3</b> |   | Ellipsis               |           |            |
| 3        | 1 | Nominal                |           |            |
| 3        | 2 | Verbal                 |           |            |
| 3        | 3 | Clausal                |           |            |
| <b>4</b> |   | Conjunction            |           |            |
| 4        | 1 | Additive               |           |            |
| 4        | 2 | Adversative            |           |            |
| 4        | 3 | Causal                 |           |            |
| 4        | 4 | Temporal               |           |            |
| <b>5</b> |   | Lexical Cohesion       |           |            |
| 5        | 1 | word repetition        |           |            |
| 5        | 2 | Synonyms               |           |            |
| 5        | 3 | superordinate relation |           |            |
| 5        | 4 | general word usage     |           |            |

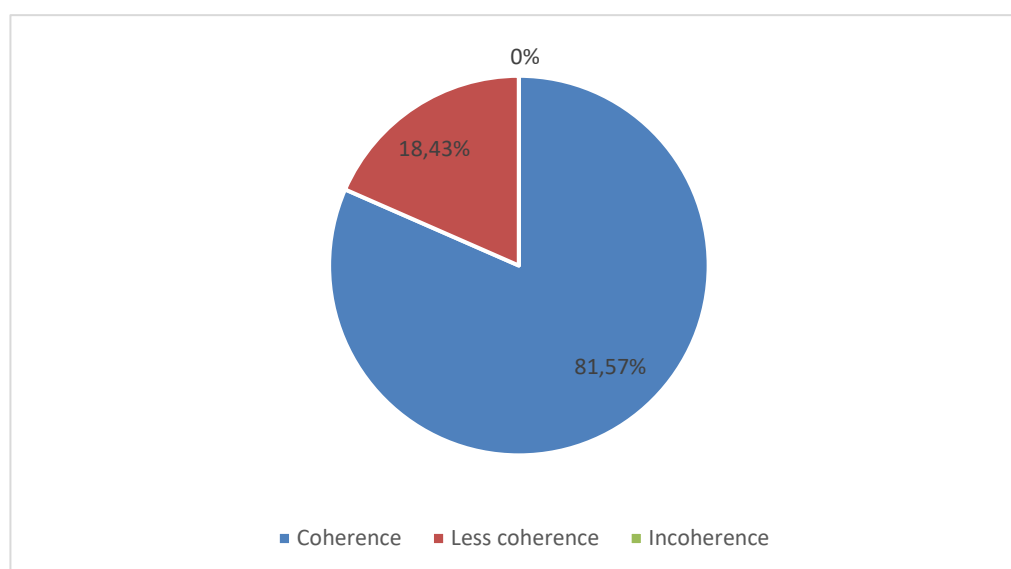
## FINDINGS

The data indicate that these students achieve a high level of coherence in their writing, with an average coherence rating of 82%. This means their descriptive paragraphs are generally well-organized. The assessment is based on 35 students paragraph who show excellent writing skills. While most students can develop topic sentences well, about 18% struggle with this aspect. Importantly, no students were found to write incoherent paragraphs. Overall, the results suggest that students are skilled at creating clear and structured descriptive texts using various cohesive devices to improve their writing flow.

The findings also show that eleventh-grade students at SMA 1 Singaraja use different cohesive devices when writing descriptive paragraphs. Lexical

cohesion is the most common, making up 43.54% of their writing. This is followed by reference at 32.99% and conjunctions at 16.94%. The use of ellipsis and substitution is much lower, at 2.82% and 3.71%, respectively. This variety in cohesive devices shows that students understand how to connect their ideas effectively.

## DISCUSSION

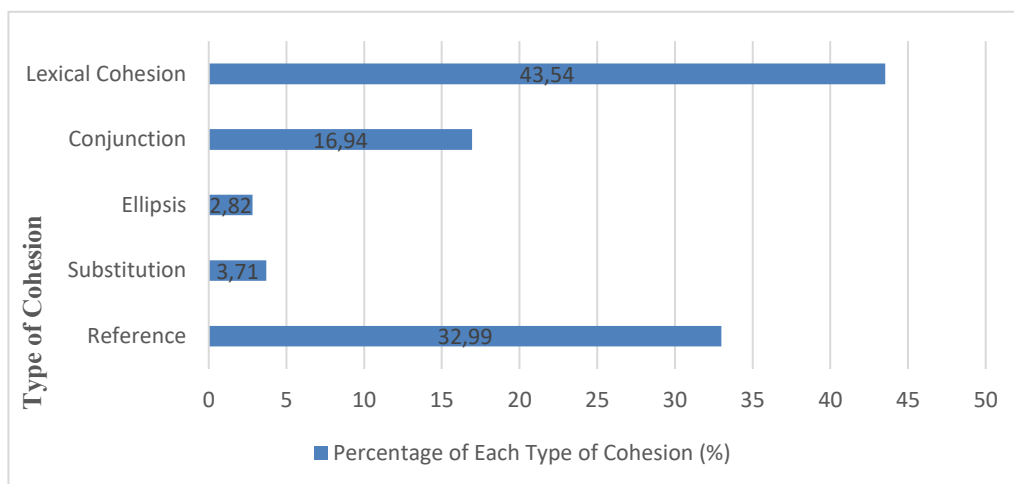


**Graph 4. 1 Statistical Chart of the Mean of Coherence Rating of Students' Descriptive Paragraphs**

Based on Graph 4.1, eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja are able to write descriptive paragraphs in a structured and coherent manner. Data shows that 82% of students, or 35 people, have excellent writing skills with paragraphs that follow a descriptive structure and develop topics optimally. However, 18% of students still had difficulty maintaining paragraph cohesion. These results are in line with research by Siti Wahyuni (2022) who found that descriptive paragraphs of high school students in Cirebon had good coherence. Analysis of students at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja also shows that they are able to compose topics supported by relevant supporting sentences and conclusions related to the main idea. Overall, students have demonstrated a strong ability to write coherent paragraphs with good logistical flow and transitions. However, some still need further guidance to improve the cohesion of their writing.

The eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Singaraja demonstrate strong coherence in their writing, with most scores above average. Their descriptive paragraphs are well-structured, logically connected, and easy to understand, reflecting their ability to write cohesive and effective texts. This suggests they have

a solid grasp of organizing ideas, using appropriate transitions, and maintaining clarity. Their writing effectively conveys information, making it engaging and accessible to readers.



**Graph 4. 2 Statistical Chart of the Percentage of Students Using Types of Cohesion**

The analysis of cohesion types highlights a clear strategy for maintaining clarity and logical flow in writing. Lexical cohesion (43.54%) is the most dominant, ensuring topic consistency through related terms, synonyms, and repetition, which is crucial in descriptive writing. References (32.99%) help link ideas using pronouns and demonstratives, preventing redundancy, while conjunctions (16.94%) ensure smooth progression. Though used less frequently, ellipsis (2.82%) and substitution (3.71%) add variety and enhance readability. Following Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, these cohesive devices contribute to well-structured writing. Similarly, research by Putra et al. (2022) found that students at SMAN 4 Praya effectively used references, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion to organize and clarify their descriptive paragraphs, improving overall readability.

The results of the researcher's observations also show that the use of lexical cohesion in students' writing is still limited and often inconsistent. Although there are some students who have used lexical cohesion devices in their paragraphs, it still needs to be improved to create coherent and easy-to-understand paragraphs. This indicates the need for more targeted learning about lexical cohesion so that students can improve their descriptive writing skills in a more structured and communicative way.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been presented in the previous chapter, of the 35 data that has been collected, and it can be

concluded that, the findings indicate that most students can write descriptive paragraphs with clear and logical meaning. Of the 35 students, 28 (82%) successfully created well-structured paragraphs with smooth sentence connections, placing them in the B (Good) category based on the rating scale. However, 7 students (18%) struggled with writing clear topic sentences and maintaining a logical flow, making their paragraphs less coherent. The percentage range for most paragraphs fell between 80% - 87%, with some reaching 85% or higher (Very Good) and a few as low as 73%. Overall, the average score for paragraph coherence was categorized as B (Good), suggesting that while most students have developed strong writing skills, some still need improvement in structuring their ideas clearly.

Based on these findings, it can be shown that the type of cohesion most commonly used in students' writing is lexical cohesion. This can be seen from the average percentage value of 43.54% of students who use lexical cohesion in their descriptive text. Followed by the use of references at 32.99%. Conjunctive devices were ranked third, covering 16.94% of the cohesive devices used in students' writing. Meanwhile, substitution devices are used sparingly, namely only 3.71%. The least used type of cohesion is the ellipsis device, which represents only 2.82%. These results highlight the varying degrees to which different cohesive devices are incorporated into students' texts.

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