

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the general issues related to the present study. These include the background of the study, research questions, purposes of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study and definition of key terms central to study.

A. Research Background

Writing is a form of expression and communication which enables learners to communicate ideas, feelings, and different attitudes in a written mode.¹ If the writer could not pass the idea in a well form of writing text or passage, the reader would not be able to get the idea precisely as the writer want. Therefore, writing is categorized as the most difficult skill of language. In writing a formal text, there are many things that need to be concerned by the writer. Firstly, writers need to be formed sentences concerned with the word choices. Secondly, writers need to be able to produce well. And next, writer should be able to organize the ideas clearly and precisely. Organizing ideas is needed to convey a logical sequence of thought. If logical connections are missing, the reader could not get the idea precisely as the writer intended.

Logical connection in writing is commonly called as coherence. According to Hinkel, 2004 (cited in Ahmed, 2010) coherence is interpreted as “the organization of discourse with all elements present and fitting together logically”.² Coherence builds logical and structural writing. “Writing cannot be achieved if there is no coherence between the words or the sentences which are

¹ Nasira Gotheban, Magister Degree Dissertation “*Identification and Analysis of Some Factors Behind Students’ Poor Writing Productions The Case Study Of 3rd Year Students At The English Department-Batna University*” Algeria: (University of Sétif Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences Department of Foreign Languages, 2010) p.14

² Abdel Hamid Ahmed, “Students’ Problems with Cohesion and Coherence in EFL Essay Writing in Egypt: Different Perspective” *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, Vol. 1, Issue 4, December 2010, p.211

arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways and above all, holding a meaning.”³

Producing a coherent piece of writing, in fact, is an enormous challenge for EFL students.⁴ As student teacher of English education department in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, they have four course steps during they learn writing. The first step was taken in 2nd semester, where they learn paragraph writing. Then in 3rd semester they have to take essay writing, and argumentative writing in 4th semester. Even though, they have learned writing to this step, writing coherently is still become a very challenging task for them. It is known from Mimid’s (2016) research result stated that only 10% of 51 students who take argumentative course is able to make a very good coherent text. As the last step, is academic writing where the students’ were thought about how to write the proposal for a research purpose. For a university student, research proposal is very important as Prof. Nelleke Bak (cited in Devi Kusetyowati, 2014 p. 2) stated that Research Proposal is a planning document that outlines writer’s thinking about research problem and describes what is to be studied and how.⁵

After the students have learned all those writing steps, the students’ have to take seminar proposal course to prepare their thesis proposal seminar before they could do the research. As the outline of the research, thesis proposal needs to be well organized to convey a logical sequence of the writer thought. The researcher takes the data from students’ thesis proposal because it is the final preparation for students to conduct their research as their research plan. Beside the researcher also wants to know the students’ ability in building logical statement or coherency of it. As they are novice

³ Nasira Gotheban, Magister Degree Dissertation “*Identification and Analysis*..... p. 16.

⁴ Abdel Hamid Ahmed, “Students’ Problems with Cohesion and Coherence.....p. 211.

⁵ Devi Kusetyowati, Thesis: “Rhetorical Problem in Background of Research Proposal Writing (A Case Study of Research Proposal at English Teacher Education Department UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya)” Surabaya: (Islamic State University Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2014) p.2

in writing a research proposal which will be presented before the examiner, it grows the researcher curiosity into the students' ability in building logical statements in their writing.

According to Devi (2014), a good research proposal needs to follow certain rules to achieve its purpose. These include the language used, the grammatical structure, punctuation, the citing technique, quoting and referencing, the paraphrasing and summarizing technique, and the ideas organization.⁶ Luna Jing Cai (cited in Devi 2014) also stated that students have to follow some certain steps in order to make it easy for the readers to understand the proposal. A good Ideas organization could help to smooth the reader comprehension into the text.

Several studies, for example Muhammad Yusuf's thesis (2013), Devi Kusetyowati's thesis (2014), Nur Hasanah's thesis (2015), Imaniar's thesis (2016) have been performed on students' research proposal. Research proposal writing has been used as an object in some research that been held in UIN Sunan Ampel yet none of them have been studying about the coherence.

Furthermore, the researcher have only found few study that held in UIN Sunan Ampel had analyzed coherence. For it is relatively new in the research on academic writing area. Beside unlike cohesion, coherence cannot be seen easily in written text. In one of the study about coherence in UIN Sunan Ampel has conclude that from 51 students who join argumentative course in English Teaching and Education Department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya only 10% who can build a very good coherence in their writing.⁷ Thus, the researcher used the students' research proposal as the object of this research because there were no researchers whose study that focus on coherence in research proposal in UIN Sunan Ampel yet.

⁶ ibid

⁷ Mimid Anggi Apriliya, Thesis: "Students' ability of building coherence and unity in argumentative writing at English education department of UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya". Surabaya: (Islamic State University Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016)

Introduction, as part of research proposal, is important for the reader because reader will be evaluating a large number of the proposal from it. According to Khan, introduction provides an introduction and statement of the problem that will be studied or reviewed. In addition, it needs to show the reason why the issues are important to the study by providing brief background information. A coherence background of the research is also needed to make a good introduction.

Nadia Hellalet (2013) stated that coherence is a complex concept which has been subject to controversy among discourse analysts.⁸ According to the text-based approach, coherence refers to the semantic unity of the text that is achieved by means of cohesive ties (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). From this approach, coherence is described in terms of the linguistic features in the text that tell apart a text from a cluster of sentences. However, many researchers who think that coherence is achieved through the relationship among sentences and ideas in a text that contribute to its rhetorical unity criticize this approach. According to Fahnestock (1983), coherence is defined as the quality enabling a reader to get meaning from a text thanks to the paragraph organization which follows some model of development. Carrell (1982) points out “If a reader does not have, or fails to access, the appropriate schema underlying the text, all cohesive ties in the world won’t help that text cohere for that reader.”(p.485).

On the other hand, according to reader-based approach, coherence is achieved through the successful interaction between the reader and the text (Carrell 1982, cited in Hellalet 2013). Unlike the text-based approach, the achievement of coherence in the reader-based approach mainly focused on the meaning that the readers get from the text according to the schemata they activate and the expectation they have. Therefore the writer and the reader

⁸ Nadia Hellalet, “Textual coherence in EFL Student Writing” *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 15, Issue 3 (Sep. - Oct. 2013), PP 54-58

are expected to share content and formal schemata which lead to the coherence of the text.⁹

Textual coherence, though it cannot be seen easily, it has some way of measurement. Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) could be used to measure the text coherence. RST proposed by Mann and Thompson¹⁰ studies that each text poses an underlying rhetorical structure that allows the extraction of the communicative intention of the writer. According to RST coherence is defined as “the absence of non-sequiturs and gaps” (Mann, 1999). In other words, every part of a coherent text has some intended function or functions; that is, some plausible reason for its presence that is evident to the reader. Yet, if there are some parts that are somehow missing, this will affect the text’s coherence. In this method, rhetorical relations are defined to hold between two non-overlapping text spans called the *nucleus* and the *satellite* denoted by N and S. the nucleus (N) contain the most important pieces of information in the relations and are considered more relevant than the satellites. On the other hand, the satellites present additional information that helps the reader in the interpretation of the nuclei.¹¹

Rhetorical Structure theory was used in this study as a framework to assess coherence in the students’ research proposal’s introduction. This theory accounts for the text structure above the clause level. It deals with text as a medium of communication that is organized hierarchically. As Mann and Thompson (1988) put it, it “provides a general way to describe the relations among clauses in a text, whether or not are grammatically or lexically signaled” (p244). In fact, it is suitable in the study of text coherence as it

⁹ Nadia Hellalet,.....p.55

¹⁰ William C. Mann – Sandra A. Thompson, “Rhetorical Structure Theory: A Theory of Text Organization.” *Technical Report from Information Sciences Institute (ISI)*,1987 pp. 1-91.

¹¹ Marcio de S. Dias – Valeria D. Feltrim – Thiago A. S. Pardo, “Using Rhetorical Structure Theory and Entity Grids to Automatically Evaluate Local Coherence in Text” *Computational Processing of the Portuguese Language* 2014 pp 232-243

provides a framework for examining relational propositions, which coherence partially depends on. In addition, rhetorical structure theory is a functional account of the text as a whole. It analyzes text in terms of the effect the writer intends to get on the reader. Therefore, its main focus is the relations that exist among clauses rather than the explicit discourse markers. Rhetorical structure theory was adopted in this study because it gives a more objective analysis of coherence relations and a visual representation of these relations.¹²

B. Research Question

The problem in this research is:

How is students' logical statement in their research proposal background at English Teacher Education Department in UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya?

C. Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to be aware of the students' ability to build logical statements in their research proposal.

D. Significance of the Study

The aim of this study is expected to provide the following contribution:

1. Study may give novice research proposal writing students to improve their ability in building coherency in their research proposal.
2. The result of the study is expected to indicate what English Language Teacher Training department could do redesign the curriculum or courses to improve the students ability in building logical statement in their writing skill.

Finally this paper is expected to invite other scholars or researchers to conduct an organized and comprehensive research with regard to coherency in writing skill

¹² Nadia Hellalet,.....p.55

E. Scope and Limit of the Study

This study wants to know how the students' logical statements in their research proposals writing. It will measure the coherence in students' research proposal. Isabel L. Beck et al stated that coherence is the extent to which the sequence of events makes sense and the extent to which the surface structure of the text makes the nature of these events and their relationship apparent. The way to make the text makes sense

This study limited to describe: first, students' introduction in research proposal coherency. In this study, the researcher focuses on novice research proposal writing students in their writing ability to build logical and structural proposal writing. To get the data, the researcher observed the students' research proposal.

F. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the meaning of terms in the study, the researcher will define the key term used in this research. It is expected to give the same understanding and interpretation between the writer and the reader. Those are:

1. Logical statement

Logical statement here means the coherency. As the meaning of coherence in writing refer to the logical connections that the reader perceives in a written text.¹³

Coherence, according to RST, is defined as "the absence of non-sequiturs and gaps" (Mann, 1999). In other words, every part of a coherent text has some intended function or functions; that is, some plausible reason for its presence that is evident to

¹³ "What Is Coherence in Composition?", *About.com Education*, <http://grammar.about.com/od/c/g/coherenceterm.htm>, accessed 28 Dec 2015.

the reader. Yet, if there are some parts that are somehow missing, this will affect the text's coherence.¹⁴

2. Research proposal

Research proposal is a document written by a researcher that provides a detailed description of the proposed program. It is like an outline of the entire research process that gives a reader a summary of the information discussed in a project.¹⁵ Research proposal here is the research proposal written by novice researchers that just begin writing the research proposal in Academic Writing course at State Islamic University Sunan Ampel Surabaya 2016

3. Rhetorical Structure Theory

Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) is a descriptive theory of a major aspect of the organization of natural text.¹⁶ It provides a combination of features that has turned out to be useful in several kinds of discourse study. It identifies hierarchic structure in text. It describes the relations between text parts in functional terms, identifying both the transition point of a relation and the extent of the items related. Rhetorical Structure theory will be used in this study as a framework to assess coherence in the students' research proposal's introduction. This theory accounts for the text structure above the clause level. It deals with text as a medium of communication that is organized hierarchically.

Mann and Thompson provided in their paper, "*Rhetorical Structure Theory: A Theory of Text Organization*" 1987, the definition of the elements of RST. They defines RST's four kinds of defined object, they are Relations, Schemas, Schema

¹⁴ Nadia Hellalet,.....p.55

¹⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_proposal 29-09-2014/06.49

¹⁶ William C. Mann – Sandra A. Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory: Toward a Functional Theory of Text Organization", *Mouton de Gruyter* 1988, Text 8(3) p.243-281

Applications, and Structure. Concisely, the relation definitions pinpoint particular relationship that can hold between two portions of a text. The schemas, based on the relations, explain patterns in which a particular span of text can be analyzed in term of other spans.¹⁷

As Mann and Thompson stated, that RST provides a general way to describe the relations among clauses in the text. It would be convenient to understand the proper definition of the relational proposition provided in the theory. Since the coherence of a text depends in part on these Relational Propositions. Relational propositions are propositions that arise from the text structure in the process of interpreting text which are unstated but inferred.¹⁸ Moreover, RST provides a framework for investigating Relational Propositions.

RST, in investigating Relational Propositions, provides a set of relations to represent the type of relations between the clauses and texts. For example the relation in the text 1:

1. I am bored, let's go to Royal plaza.

This text has two clauses; the first one can be called as *nucleus* (N) because it contains the most important pieces of information in the relations and are considered more relevant than the satellites. The second part here as the *satellite* (S) provide the *solution* for the *problem* stated in the N thus the predicate of the relational proposition in this example is called "Solutionhood". In this case going to Royal Plaza "partially" solves the problem present. For the other definition of the relations¹⁹ is provided in the *appendix 1*.

¹⁷ William C. Mann – Sandra A. Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory: A Theory of Text Organization", *Information Sciences Institute* 1987, p.3

¹⁸ William C. Mann – Sandra A. Thompson, "Rhetorical Structure Theory: A Theory of Text Organization", *Information Sciences Institute* 1987, p.3

¹⁹ <http://www-bcf.usc.edu/~billmann/rst-previewatusc/reldefs.htm#Listlink> 21st November 2016