Analyzing Coherence and Cohesion in Eleventh Graders' Descriptive Paragraphs at SMA N 1 Sawan

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze how eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sawan in the 2024/2025 academic year construct coherent paragraphs and how they apply cohesive devices in their writing. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative descriptive techniques. Data collection was carried out through the documentation of 22 paragraphs written by students, but only 20 of these paragraphs met the analysis criteria. The main instruments in this study were the coherence assessment rubric and the cohesion frequency table. According to the findings of this study, 90% of the paragraphs were found to be coherent, with an average coherence score of 84.35%. However, 10% did not have adequate coherence. The most frequently used cohesive devices included references, substitutions, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion, with references and conjunctions being the most prevalent. These findings highlight the importance of targeted teaching strategies in enhancing students' writing competence, particularly in developing logical flow and sentence connectivity within an academic context. Therefore, this study concludes that although most students can construct coherent and cohesive descriptive paragraphs, there is still a need for improvement in the application and variation of cohesive devices.

ARTICLE INFO

INTRODUCTION

According to Mailani et al. (2022), language is an essential aspect of our lives, enabling us to communicate using characters. As an international language, many students are encouraged to learn English (Putra et al., 2022). According to Sosial et al.

(2023), to avoid miscommunication between humans, understanding language is essential for everyone. There are four language skills, namely Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing (Anggraeni et al., 2022). According to Setiawan (2021), writing is one of the fundamental skills in learning English and plays a crucial role in academic contexts. Writing ability is described as the extent to which the writer can understand and express the process of thinking, behaving, and feeling in written form (Ratminingsih et al., 2018).

In language learning, writing is an essential component of language learning skills; however, there are often obstacles to its implementation (Radita et al., 2023). According to Dini Dwi Puspitasari et al. (2020), although important, writing remains a challenge that is visible to many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, especially in terms of composing coherent and cohesive texts. The reason writing is part of teaching is because writing is a process, and its type often influences what people write (Adiguna et al., 2023). According to Art et al. (2024), for students to easily explain the development of their ideas, they must possess good writing skills. Thus, the development of ideas in learning also needs to be developed (Putu et al., 2020).

English is taught as a foreign language at all levels of education in Indonesia. However, learners often struggle to organize their ideas logically and connect them effectively within and across sentences (Setiawan, 2021). According to Halliday and Hasan (1989), coherence and cohesion are crucial components of effective writing, as they ensure that texts are logically structured and linguistically coherent. However, several studies have shown that EFL learners tend to focus more on grammar and vocabulary while neglecting discourse-level features such as flow of ideas and semantic unity.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1989), a well-written text must demonstrate coherence and cohesion in order to be considered meaningful and effective. Previous studies by Gunas (2020) and Arabia et al. (2023) have focused on various issues, including limited vocabulary, poor sentence structure, and inadequate understanding of coherence strategies among EFL learners. Meanwhile, studies conducted by Leli (2020) and RahmtAllah (2020) have shown that students tend to prioritize grammatical and vocabulary accuracy over the logical sequence of ideas, resulting in incoherent texts. Thus, previous studies highlighted that limited vocabulary, lack of structural awareness, and inadequate practice contribute to poor coherence and cohesion in students' writing.

According to RahmtAllah (2020), many students struggle to express their ideas coherently and fail to use cohesive devices effectively, which hinders the clarity and unity of their paragraphs. Ideally, students should be able to produce descriptive paragraphs that reflect clear organization and logical development of ideas, supported by the appropriate use of cohesive devices such as references, substitutions, ellipses, conjunctions, and lexical ties. However, many students still struggle to meet this standard. Despite the available literature, few studies have closely examined students' actual paragraph writing practices in specific Indonesian educational contexts.

Extensive research has been conducted on cohesion and coherence. However, only a few studies have focused on descriptive paragraphs written by high school students in less urban areas, such as Buleleng, Bali. In this study, the researchers address this gap by analyzing the coherence and types of cohesion in descriptive paragraphs written by eleventh-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Sawan. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, which not only identifies the current state of students' writing but also provides educators with insights to improve their teaching strategies. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on structural coherence and linguistic cohesion in a specific local context, providing a nuanced understanding of students' paragraph writing performance and its pedagogical implications. Aiming to offer practical insights into students' strengths and weaknesses in organizing ideas and using cohesive devices, the researchers evaluated students' texts using a rubric and a cohesion frequency table to inform future teaching strategies and curriculum development in EFL writing instruction. Thus, the results of this study can inform teaching strategies that foster stronger writing skills, contributing to improved academic outcomes for EFL learners in similar educational settings.

METHOD

This study employed a sequential mixed-methods approach, which involves combining qualitative and quantitative descriptive methods. The quantitative data in this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics to calculate the average score and categorize the quality of the paragraphs. Meanwhile, the qualitative analysis in this study shows how coherence and cohesion are manifested in the text. The researchers also used convergent parallel design to ensure a balanced interpretation of the data. Using a convergent parallel design enables simultaneous data collection and analysis, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of students' writing performance. The theory used in this study is based on Halliday and Hasan's (1989) theory.

The place chosen by the researchers in this study was SMA Negeri 1 Sawan. This is because previously, SMA Negeri 1 Sawan had never been the subject of research related to coherence and cohesion in descriptive writing. Additionally, SMA Negeri 1 Sawan provides an appropriate context in which students have received instruction in writing descriptive texts. Students from Class XI-C who participated in this study. Participants were selected through cluster random sampling from four eleventh grades at SMA Negeri 1 Sawan in the 2024/2025 academic year.

Data collection in this study employed three procedures: classroom observation, document collection, and paragraph evaluation. The initial step taken by the researchers was to coordinate with the English teacher to observe and identify relevant learning activities involving descriptive writing by using a coherence assessment rubric and a cohesion frequency table as research instruments. The rubric, completed by two expert assessors, was used to evaluate each paragraph based on clarity, relevance, organization,

diction, and sentence structure. Meanwhile, the cohesion frequency table was used to record the presence and frequency of cohesive devices, such as references, substitutions, ellipsis, conjunctions, and lexical cohesion. Additionally, the researchers employed two types of triangulation in this study: data source triangulation and investigator triangulation. This is to ensure the validity of the data through the collaboration of several assessors and sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Results

1. The Students' Coherence in Writing Descriptive Paragraphs

Both judges have strongly agreed upon these results in evaluating the quality of coherence of students' texts. The following are the results of the coherence assessment of 20 descriptive paragraphs written by students, conducted by two judges. From Table 1, the average value is produced.

Table 1. Mean Coherence Rating by 2 Raters

Text	1st Rater	2nd Rater	Score	Mean Score	Rate
T1	75	88	163	81,5	B (Good)
T2	65	69	134	67	C (Fair)
T3	75	67	142	71	B (Good)
T4	90	95	185	92,5	A (Very Good)
T5	93	90	183	91,5	A (Very Good)
T6	80	88	168	84	B (Good)
T7	67	66	133	66,5	C (Fair)
T8	96	93	189	94,5	A (Very Good)
T9	80	90	170	85	A (Very Good)
T10	90	95	185	92,5	A (Very Good)
T11	89	87	176	88	A (Very Good)
T12	95	90	185	92,5	A (Very Good)
T13	75	88	163	81,5	B (Good)
T14	85	90	175	87,5	A (Very Good)
T15	80	82	162	81	B (Good)
T16	80	82	162	81	B (Good)
T17	75	85	160	80	B (Good)
T18	82	80	162	81	B (Good)
T19	97	100	197	98,5	A (Very Good)
T20	85	95	180	90	A (Very Good)
		Average		**84,35**	

The mean coherence score across all 20 student paragraphs was 84.35. This indicates a generally strong ability to organize ideas cohesively. Individual performance was varied, indicating varying levels of writing ability among students. To make the data easier to understand, the researchers divided the distribution of coherence ratings into three categories, namely Very Good (A), Good (B), and Fair (C). In all three performance categories, the data showed a significant distribution, with 50% of the paragraphs rated Very Good and 40% rated Good.

On the other hand, 10% were in the Fair category. Thus, the analysis conducted by the researchers showed that 18 out of 20 paragraphs were considered coherent. This means that 90% of the students' paragraphs met the coherence standard, but only 10% were categorized as 'incoherent.'

The topic sentences below provide further or more detailed explanations because they serve as the basis for supporting sentences. The following are some examples of topic sentences in coherent paragraphs in the 'Very Good' category found in student texts.

(1) 'The deer is a majestic and graceful animal that is often found in forests and woodlands.'
(2) 'Borobudur temple is the largest Buddhist temple in the world located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia.'
(3) 'Uluwatu Temple, or Pura Luruh Uluwatu, is one of Bali's most iconic sea temples.'
(4) 'Pink Beach or Pantai Merah Muda is one of the beaches in Komodo Island, East Nusa Tenggara.'
(5) 'Bali is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia.'
(6) 'Monkeys are playful and inquisitive animals that belong to the primate family.'

The supporting details for each of these paragraphs are thorough, descriptive, and logically organized. For example, the paragraph with a topic sentence (1), 'The deer is a majestic and graceful animal that is often found in forests and woodlands.', provides strong physical, behavioral, and environmental descriptions. In addition, the paragraphs on this topic feature smooth transitions and elegant diction, exemplified by words such as 'majestic' and 'graceful.'

Next, in the topic sentence (2), 'Borobudur temple is the largest Buddhist temple in the world located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia.', is followed by an in-depth discussion of its architecture and cultural significance, using descriptive vocabulary such as 'mandala design' and 'extraordinarily beautiful views'. Thus, this topic sentence describes the architecture and a well-developed cultural description.

In topic sentence (3), 'Uluwatu Temple, or Pura Luruh Uluwatu, is one of Bali's most iconic sea temples.', provides a combination of spiritual, cultural, and scenic aspects. Thus, this topic sentence focuses on spiritual, cultural, and scenic aspects.

This topic sentence also highlights unique cultural experiences such as the Kecak dance performance.

Similar to the previous topic sentence, in the topic sentence (4), 'Pink Beach or Pantai Merah Muda is one of the beaches in Komodo Island, East Nusa Tenggara.' describes by introducing Pink Beach as one of the unique beaches on Komodo Island. The reason the Pink Beach paragraph stands out is that it provides a scientific explanation of the pink sand. Thus, it explains the scientific reason behind the pink color. Also, it is supplemented with details of tourism and marine biodiversity.

In topic sentence (5), 'Bali is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia.', describes an effective combination of geographical, cultural, and tourist activities. This topic sentence provides an informative and interesting summary. In topic sentence (6), 'Monkeys are playful and inquisitive animals that belong to the primate family.' this is notable for its discussion of physical characteristics, social behavior, and cognitive abilities. Additionally, concern for wildlife conservation is also expressed in this sentence. Thus, this sentence strikes a balance between facts and concern for conservation.

In the 'Good' category, the paragraph generally maintains coherence but shows limitations in transitions or sentence structure. The text occasionally has grammatical issues or lacks fluency, but it maintains a clear topic and includes supporting sentences. For example, in the topic sentence (7), 'Fried rice is my favorite food.', the sentence contains repeated statements such as 'Fried rice is very good', 'Fried rice is a very popular food', and 'Everyone loves fried rice'. Additionally, there are no transitional phrases, resulting in a disjointed structure. Despite these shortcomings, the paragraph remains coherent because of its consistent focus on the main subject.

There are 10% of the analyzed paragraphs that are rated as 'Fair', which indicates inconsistency. The text lacks a clear structure, logical flow, and adequate development of ideas. For example, the paragraph, 'Elephants are the largest land animals, known for their long trunks, large ears, and thick grey skin.', consists of a single sentence with no elaboration or connection to additional ideas. This makes the paragraph disjointed and underdeveloped, lacking support and a clear conclusion.

2. The Types of Cohesion Used in the Students' Paragraphs

In this study, it was found that students used various types of cohesion, as assessed by paragraph analysis of their writing, including reference, substance, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. In Table 2, the findings are explained in detail.

Table 2. Cohesion Relations in Student Paragraphs

No.	Types of Cohesion	Frequency	Percentage
	Reference		
	1.1 Exophoric	8	4,62%
1	1.2 Endophoric		
	Anaphoric	45	25,99%
	Cataphoric	3	1,73%
	Substitution		
	2.1 Nominal	6	3,47%
2	2.2 Verbal	2	1,16%
	2.3 Clausal	1	0,58%
	Elipsis		
	3.1 Nominal	4	2,31%
3	3.2 Verbal	1	0,58%
	3.3 Klausal	0	0,00%
	Conjunction		
	4.1 Additive	25	14,45%
4	4.2 Adversative	10	5,78%
	4.3 Clausal	12	6,94%
	4.4 Temporal	15	8,67%
	Lexical Cohesion		
	5.1 Repetition	30	17,34%
5	5.2 Synonym	5	2,89%
	5.3 Superordinate relation	2	1,16%
	5.4 General Word	4	2,31%
	Total	173	100,00%

The formula of percentage:

$$\text{Percentage (P)} = \frac{Frequency\ of\ each\ type\ of\ cohesion\ (N)}{Total\ frequency\ (T)} \times 100\%$$

Based on the analysis of cohesion in students' descriptive paragraphs, five main types of cohesive devices are identified, including reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. In this case, the most frequently used in conjunction, accounting for 62 times and covering 35.84% of all cohesion examples. In second place, in terms of frequency of use, is the reference, accounting for 56 instances and covering 32.37%. This indicates that students often rely on referential devices, such as pronouns and demonstratives, to connect ideas. In third place is lexical cohesion, accounting for 41 instances and covering 23.70%, primarily consisting of repetition and the occasional use of synonyms. This shows that maintaining topic consistency through vocabulary is an effort that students make.

Meanwhile, substitution and ellipsis are used much less frequently by

students, appearing only 9 times (5.20%) and 5 times (2.89%), respectively. This indicates a limited mastery of these more complex cohesive strategies. These patterns highlight students' proficiency in using basic types of cohesion, such as conjunctions and references. However, they tend to use substitution and ellipsis less, which indicates a potential area for instructional focus in writing development.

The following are more detailed examples, along with explanations of each type of cohesion described in the subsequent sub-sections.

1. Reference
   a. Exophoric

      For example, 'Borobudur temple is the largest Buddhist temple in the world located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia'. The phrase "Borobudur temple" refers to a topic that is known from the context outside the text. This illustrates the use of exophoric reference, which is a type of reference that relies on a real-world situation or context outside the text.

   b. Endophoric
   (a) Anaphoric

      For example, 'Borobudur temple is the largest Buddhist temple in the world located in Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia. Built-in the 9th century by the Syailendra Dynasty, this temple is one of the world's cultural heritages recognized by UNESCO'. The phrase "this temple" also refers to the previously mentioned 'Borobudur temple'. This creates cohesion without explicitly repeating the word. Another example of Anaphoric is 'Uluwatu Temple, or Pura Luhur Uluwatu, is one of Bali's most iconic sea temples. Perched on a stunning clifftop 70 meters above the Indian Ocean, this ancient Hindu temple offers breathtaking sunset views'. The phrase "this ancient Hindu temple" refers to "Uluwatu Temple", which strengthens the connection between the sentences and keeps the reader focused on the topic.

      Another example is 'Rabbit: My Rabbit: a very cute rabbit. His fur is thick white, he has red eyes and a thin body. My rabbit's name is Lilo'. The words "his" and "my rabbit" refer back to the noun "rabbit". This is to maintain textual continuity.

   (b) Cataphoric

      For example, 'She is very cute and spoiled, but she is also very naughty and likes to scratch. Lili has white fur and beautiful eyes' and 'It is a large, powerful cat known as the king of the jungle. The lion has a golden coat, and males have a majestic mane' and 'They are graceful animals often found in forests and woodlands. Deer have sleek bodies, gentle eyes, and elegant movements'. These sentences are cataphoric references, which means that the pronoun refers to an element that is

mentioned later. The words 'she', 'it', dan 'they' come before the actual subject, which means the actual subjects such as 'Lili', 'the lion', dan 'deer'.

2. Substitution
   a. Nominal

      For example, 'My dog's name is Mely and his fur color is brown. He likes to eat meat every day. I play with him. He's fat. He likes to eat'. The word "meat" is replaced with a more general word such as "eat". This is done to avoid repetition and maintain the text's cohesiveness.

   b. Verbal

      For example, 'Fried rice is very good. Initially, fried rice came from China'. The use of "came from" implies the information mentioned earlier, replacing a longer description of the origin of fried rice.

   c. Clausal

      For example, 'If he wants to eat, he will make a 'meow' sound at me, as if that is a sign that he is hungry'. The word "that" replaces the previous clause, namely 'He will make a 'meow' sound'.

3. Ellipsis
   a. Nominal

      For example, 'Bali is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia. It is known for its beautiful beaches, rich culture, and stunning natural landscapes. The island offers various activities such as surfing in Kuta, diving in Tulamben, and visiting historic temples like Tanah Lot Temple. In addition, Bali is also known for its tranquil and relaxing atmosphere, especially in Ubud'. This paragraph can be called a nominal ellipsis because the full subject 'Bali is' is not repeated. After all, its meaning is clear.

   b. Clausal

      For example, 'Fried rice is my favorite food. Fried rice is a typical Indonesian food. Fried rice is a very popular food. The ingredients for making fried rice are rice, cooking oil, soy sauce, and other seasonings. Everyone loves fried rice. Fried rice is very good. Initially, fried rice came from China. Fried rice has been around since 4000 BC'. This paragraph is called a verbal ellipsis because clauses such as 'because everyone loves it' are omitted because they are implied from the context.

4. Conjunction
   a. Additive

      For example, 'Bali is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Indonesia. It is known for its beautiful beaches, rich culture, and stunning natural landscapes. The island offers various activities such as surfing in

Kuta, diving in Tulamben, and visiting historic temples like Tanah Lot Temple. In addition, Bali is also known for its tranquil and relaxing atmosphere, especially in Ubud'. The conjunctions "and" and "in addition" add information and strengthen the flow of the sentence.

b. Adversative

For example, 'My Best Friend: My Best friend is a kind person, beautiful, funny, friendly, affectionate, and also a comedian. He is grumpy, but he laughs easily; he enjoys spicy food but often experiences stomachaches. He likes cold drinks, and he likes drinking'. The word "but" connects two contradictory ideas. This shows the complex nature of the character being described.

c. Clausal

For example, 'Bali is a great place to visit because it has many beautiful beaches. I went to Kuta Beach and enjoyed the sunset. I also visited Ubud, which is famous for being home to many artists. The food in Bali is also delicious, so I tried many traditional dishes—the conjunction 'because' connects cause and effect between two ideas.

d. Temporal

For example, 'Last summer, my family and I traveled to Bali. We arrived in the afternoon and went to our hotel to rest. The next morning, we woke up early and had breakfast before heading to the beach. While we were swimming, the sun started to shine brightly. Then, we explored the local market and bought some souvenirs. Finally, in the evening, we watched the sunset at Tanah Lot, which was a breathtaking experience'. Conjunctions such as 'next', 'while', 'then', and 'finally' organize the time sequence of events. This makes the story in the paragraph orderly and logical.

5. Lexical Cohesion

a. Repetition

For example, 'I love dogs. Dogs are very loyal animals. My dogs always wait for me when I come home. I feed my dogs every day because dogs need to eat well to stay healthy' and 'My hobby is drawing. I love drawing because drawing makes me feel happy. When I have free time, I spend it drawing various kinds of pictures. Drawing is very important to me because drawing helps me express my feelings'. Repetition of words such as "dogs" and "drawing" emphasizes the main topic and maintains consistency in the discussion. Another example, 'Every morning, I wake up early. After waking up, I brush my teeth and take a shower. Then, I eat my breakfast. After breakfast, I prepare my school bag and go to school. At school, I study different subjects. After school, I go home and do my homework. Then, I eat dinner and watch TV before going to bed'.

Repetition of the words 'breakfast', 'school', and 'home' also emphasizes the main topic and maintains consistency in the discussion.

b. Synonym

For example, 'Kevin is my best friend. This companion always supports me in everything I do. My buddy and I love to play football together and share many great memories'. The use of synonyms such as 'best friend', "companion", and "buddy" maintains the meaning by avoiding repetition.

c. Superordinate Relation

For example, 'The Deer is a majestic and graceful animal that is often found in forests and woodlands. With their sleek and slender bodies, gentle eyes, and graceful movements, they are a sight to behold in their natural habitat. Deers are herbivorous animals, feeding on a diet of leaves, grass, and other vegetation. Their antlers, which are found in males, are used for defense and mating rituals. Deers are also known for their keen sense of hearing and smell, making them alert and cautious animals'. The phrase "herbivorous animals" is a general category of 'deer'. This shows a general-specific hierarchical relationship.

d. General Word

For example, 'Deer are majestic and graceful animals that are often found in forests and woodlands. With their sleek and slender bodies, gentle eyes, and elegant movements, these animals create a picturesque scene in their natural habitat. They are known for their agility and speed, and as animals, they thrive on a diet of leaves, grass, and other vegetation'. The word 'animals' is used as a general word to connect all information related to 'deer', which creates lexical cohesion.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that most students were able to create coherent descriptive paragraphs, with 90% of the texts rated as coherent and an average coherence score of 84.35. This reflects a generally strong understanding of paragraph structure and organization of ideas among students. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), coherence refers to the semantic unity of a text, where the overall meaning is contributed by each part of the text. In this study, coherent paragraphs were found to contain effective topic sentences, well-structured supporting details, and logical sequences, and students often ended with a summary or conclusive sentence.

The statement from Rosita et al. (2022) supports the results of this study, which emphasizes that the source of coherence is logical continuity and thematic development throughout sentences and paragraphs. On the other hand, Putra et al. (2022) align with this study in their findings regarding students' ability to develop ideas through

descriptions, as evident in the descriptions of topics such as tourist destinations and animals. According to the study by Putra et al. (2022), coherence in writing is enhanced by syntactic control, particularly in the use of subject-predicate structures and logical transitions. However, coherence problems were observed in 10% of texts classified as 'fair'. These texts often lack logical development, repetitive ideas, and unclear sentence connections. This finding aligns with Riswanto's (2022) observations, which suggest that although many students can construct basic, coherent paragraphs, others still struggle with the effective integration and development of ideas.

Interestingly, despite the lack of an explicit concluding sentence, some students' paragraphs were able to achieve coherence, indicating that coherence can still be maintained through effective topic development and cohesive support. Thus, the findings suggest that coherence depends not only on mechanical structure but also on clarity of thought and purpose. This underscores the importance of teaching students how to logically connect ideas, use transitional devices effectively, and ensure that each sentence contributes meaningfully to the main topic.

Meanwhile, findings on cohesion revealed that students most frequently used conjunctions (36%) and references (32%) in constructing their paragraphs, followed by lexical cohesion (24%). Substitution and ellipsis were used less frequently (5% and 3%). These usage patterns indicate a reliance on more explicitly taught and commonly taught cohesive devices, reflecting students' exposure to and limited practice of more subtle forms of cohesion. The high frequency of conjunctions in this study, particularly additive types such as 'and' and 'in addition', and temporal types such as 'then' and 'finally', indicates students' ability to sequence ideas and add supporting information, which is important in descriptive writing. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), conjunctions provide textual cohesion by clarifying logical relationships, and their prevalence highlights their instructional emphasis in the classroom.

Additionally, anaphoric reference, the most commonly used form of reference (26%), reflects students' tendency to relate to previously mentioned subjects, which can avoid redundancy and maintain coherence throughout the sentence. Research conducted by Ariwibowo et al. (2023), is in line with the dominance of this device. In their study, it was found that conjunctions and references typically make students dependent because they are the primary means of achieving cohesion. On the other hand, research by Magdalein et al. (2022) deviates from and is not in line with this pattern. According to Magdalein et al. (2022), lexical cohesion, especially repetition, is the most dominant feature. However, in the current study, lexical repetition accounted for 17% of all cohesive ties, which illustrates students' dependence on keyword repetition, such as 'drawing' and 'dog', to maintain topic continuity.

Additionally, the developmental gap is attributed to the limited use of substitution and ellipsis. These cohesive devices require a more nuanced understanding and control of sentence structure, which students at the observed proficiency level have not yet mastered. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), substitution and ellipsis are markers

of more advanced language control, which learners with developing academic writing skills often underutilize. This gap is reflected in the research of Riswanto (2022), who emphasized that ensuring the correct application of cohesive devices is also necessary, rather than simply introducing various cohesive devices. Furthermore, the limited use of clause substitution and clause ellipsis suggests that instruction should be expanded to include exercises that reinforce these less intuitive but powerful, cohesive techniques.

Although repetition is widely used, its excessive or improper use can hurt text fluency. An example is repeating the same structure without adding new information. Additionally, the paragraph about fried rice contains repeated sentences, yet it remains less informative. This suggests that although repetition can ensure cohesion, its effectiveness depends on how the repetition contributes to the development of meaning. More specifically, students' writing reveals the need for explicit instruction in more sophisticated cohesion strategies, despite showing basic control over basic cohesive mechanisms. Thus, educators can better support the development of cohesive and dynamic writing in students by incorporating activities that involve the identification, analysis, and application of substitutions, ellipsis, and synonyms.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze how eleventh-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sawan in the 2024/2025 academic year construct coherent paragraphs and how they apply cohesive devices in their writing. The study's findings showed that most students demonstrated a satisfactory to excellent ability in constructing coherent paragraphs, with 90% of the samples categorized as coherent and an average coherence score of 84.35%. Thus, this indicates that most students were able to organize their ideas logically, maintain relevance, and use appropriate diction to support the flow of thought throughout their paragraphs. In terms of cohesion, references and conjunctions were more widely used by students as cohesive devices, which together accounted for more than 67% of all examples. This indicates a strong reliance on basic grammatical connectives to maintain relationships between sentences. However, gaps in students' mastery of more advanced cohesive strategies were highlighted in the limited use of substitution and ellipsis. While lexical cohesion was present through repetition and the use of synonyms, it did not have sufficient variation to enhance the semantic unity of the text fully.

The findings of this study confirm the initial assumption that although students are generally able to write coherent and cohesive descriptive paragraphs, there is still room for pedagogical development. Specifically, instruction should be enhanced to include targeted practice in using a wider range of cohesive devices and improving paragraph transitions for better text fluency. Moving forward, especially in areas where writing skills are still underdeveloped, this study can provide valuable insights for EFL educators and curriculum designers. The methodology

employed and the findings of this study can serve as a basis for future research on paragraph development in similar contexts. The researchers suggest that future research explore classroom-based interventions or longitudinal assessments to evaluate how explicit instruction on cohesion affects students' writing quality over time. Thus, the development of this study and future research is expected to contribute to more effective writing instruction in the future.

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