Chapter 1

Introduction

Background of the Study

Communication can be carried out in written and spoken forms. Basically, those two kinds of communication have different systems which are used to convey different forms of a language. "While the spoken mode is coded in sounds, the written mode is coded in symbols" (Cornbleet & Carter, 2001). In spoken, the sounds are used to deliver the speakers' ideas or messages to be listened and understood by the listeners. While in written the symbols which are used are letters and words to build meaningful sentences.

People can easily differentiate between written and spoken language. Writing is long lasting while speech is ephemeral (Baron, 2005). Writers receive no immediate feedback from their readers, except in computer-based communication. Therefore writers cannot rely on context to clarify things, so they need to explain things clearly and unambiguously than in speech,

except in written correspondence between people who know one another well. Speech is usually a dynamic interaction between two or more people.

Writing is a method of representing language in a visual form. Visually, people can easily read and understand writing. The writer can deliver his ideas through words and sentences. According to Bowker (2007: 2), "Writing is a skill that is required in many contexts throughout life." For example, when people want to apply for a job, they will write application letters, when they want to buy or do any shipping, they will write a letter. People can say that writing is needed in any field of study or work since every study requires people to convey ideas in written. Writing gives people more 'thinking time' than they get when they attempt spontaneous conversation (Harmer, 2007: 112). Writing gives students more opportunities for language processing. The language process should run well so that the language which is used could completely express ideas. When the idea is well expressed, ambiguity or misunderstanding can be avoided.

Looking deeper about writing, Harmer (2007: 330) divided writing into: writing-for-learning and writing-for-writing. Writing-for-learning is a kind of writing to help students learn language or to test them on that language. For example, if teachers ask students to write sentences using future tense 'going to' the teachers actually help students remember the 'going to' future. Another example is that when students have a test which asks them to write their wishes in the past or in the future, then the students do writing-for-learning activity. On the other hand, writing-for-writing is aimed at developing students' writing skills. According to Harmer (2007: 330), this kind of writing makes students better in writing. Writing-for-writing looks at the whole text whereas text construction, layout, style, and effectiveness are given attention. Similarly, Sedita (2013: 2) mentioned that writing can be differentiated into learning to write and writing to learn. Learning to write deals with how to write: composing, drafting, noticing punctuation, recognizing grammar, etc. Writing to learn deals with how to use writing to learn content: asking students to write papers, emails, letters, etc.

Academic writing is one of writing-for-writing activities. "Academic writing is a product of many considerations: audience, purpose, organization, style, flow, and presentation" (Swales & Feak, 2004: 7). Audience and purpose are typically interconnected. To be successful in a writing task, the writers need to have an understanding of the audience's expectations and prior knowledge. If the audience knows less than the writer, the writer's purpose is often instructional. If the audience knows more than the writer, the writer's purpose is usually to *display* familiarity, expertise, and intelligence. Organization deals with how writing is presented to readers in a certain structured format. In general, the format of a piece of writing is introduction, body, and conclusion. Long and short pieces of writing have a regular, predictable pattern of organization.

The style of academic writing is more formal than any other kinds of writing. The words, sentence structure, hedges, and also expressions which are used are the formal one. The style of a particular piece must not only be consistent but must also be appropriate for

both the message being conveyed and the audience. Another important consideration for successful communication is the flow. Flow is the movement from one statement to the next in a text. Establishing a clear connection of ideas is important to help the reader follow the text (Swales & Feak, 2004: 26). Finally, to complete the success, the presented writing is more likely to receive a positive response.

The considerations of academic writing above are interconnected. If a writer loses one of the considerations, the content will not be shared well. For example, a writer needs to match the content with the audience. Besides that, a writer needs to check whether the content is appropriate with the purpose, style, and etc.

Any piece of academic writing must have an introduction. "The introductory paragraph should indeed be written in such a fashion that would encourage the reader to read the paper"(Peay, 2007: 3). An introductory paragraph is supposed to serve as an introduction or an overview of what the paper is about. As mentioned by

the Greek philosopher, Plato, in Swales & Feak (2004: 242), "The beginning is half of the whole." Producing a good introduction is one of the hard parts in writing. In the introduction, writers will try to tell their background, purpose, the importance of the writing, and position of the writer. Introduction is made of a few general statements to attract the readers' attention and a thesis statement to state the main idea of the essay (Oshima & Hogue, 2006: 57). An introduction serves as an opportunity to shape the reader's opinion about the writer's main idea before the reader gets to the thesis statement.

In order to make a readable introductory paragraph, writers need to order the information. Ordering information is a crucial part in writing since the information which is served must be easily understood by the readers. The ordering information between a short essay and a research article is slightly different. In a short essay, the information is usually ordered from the simplest to the most complicated one. According to Olsen & Huckin (1983), there are three techniques to

order the information in writing: put the old information before new, put the topical information in subject position, and put the short noun phrases before long ones. On the other hand, in a research article, the information will be ordered according to the sequence, from general to specific. Weissberg & Buker (1990: 22) mentioned five ordering information stages in a research article: general statement(s) about a field of research, more specific statements about problem already studied by other researchers, statement(s) indicates the need for more investigation, purposes or objectives of the study, and optional statement(s) giving a value or justification of the study.

In line with ordering information, moves also help writers write introductory paragraphs. Moves functionally describe a part or section in a research article. Moves assist writers who are not originally from the same discourse community to write. According to Swales (1990: 141), a Create a Research Space (CARS) model for article introduction has three moves: establishing territory, establishing a niche, and

occupying the niche. From these moves, Swales captured the characteristics of Research Article (RA) introductions are the need to re-establish the significance of the research field, the need to 'situate' the actual research in terms of that significance, and the need to show how this niche in wider ecosystem will be occupied and defended (1990: 140-142).

Several earlier researches on introductory paragraph have been conducted. Lakic (2010) investigated the genre of Research Article (RA) introductions in economics. The findings showed that, despite similarities with Swales' model, there are differences in economics RA introductions arising from the characteristics of the discipline. However, the study had shown that Swales' model is an important tool in analyzing RA introductions. Further, Lakic argued the additional research is necessary to reveal specific characteristics in different disciplines. The other research was conducted by Habibi (2008). He analyzed research article introductions from three related fields, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Psycholinguistics, and

Sociolinguistics, using Swales' CARS model. The results marked differences across the disciplines regarding Move 2/step 1B. It is also indicated that there is no marked differences in research article introductions across the disciplines in terms of Move 1 and 3 along with their constituent steps.

A good introductory paragraph must be coherent and unified. Coherence is an important element in writing which bound a sentence to another sentences, a paragraph to another paragraph. Similarly, Arnaudet & Barrett (1984) mentioned "Coherence is how one part of a text is related and how a text moves naturally from one idea to another." Other experts said, "A coherence paragraph will be achieved when the sentences hold together; that is, the movement from one sentence to the next must be logical and smooth" (Oshima & Hogue, 2006). There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly or well connected to the next sentences. If the coherence is not there, a reader will not be able to grasp ideas of the writing. Basically, coherence cannot be separated from writing. Without

coherence, the flow of the writing cannot be smooth and logical, and then readers will hard to understand the message inside.

The way writers write a coherent introductory paragraph is different with the one in the body paragraphs. In the introduction, the coherence will be more likely to follow the flow. There are no set rules to the sequence or inclusion of all the stages (purpose, focus, position of the writer, etc.). McKinney (2008) said that the basic principle in writing introductory paragraph is to begin with general information/statements and become more specific or focused.   In the body paragraph, writers will have more structured arguments and discussion. Each body paragraph should make a point, and possibly sub-points, illustrating, and, possibly, qualifying the sub-point(s). The body paragraphs must have a main idea or a topic sentence, after that writer can elaborate it by giving explanation or examples.

Research on coherence was conducted by Chenail, et al (2009). In Chenail's study, four editors of *The Qualitative Report* presented how they collaborated

with authors to facilitate improvement papers' coherence in such areas like co-relating title, abstract, and the paper accuracy. Besides that, they also help to improve in coordinating the method presented with method employed and calibrating the exuberance of implications with the essence of the findings. The editors share exercises, templates, and exemplary articles they use to help authors to create coherent texts. The researchers concluded that the best way to improve the coherence of qualitative research is for researchers to focus on that ingredient from the very beginning of the conception and development of their research studies.

Writing academic paper is an obligatory work which must be done by graduate students. All subjects require students to write an academic paper for the final projects. The paper must be complete and good. Complete means it consist of introduction, body, and conclusion. The idea of complete paper depends on its introduction since it helps the reader to get into the writing, to know the background of the writing, and to know the thesis statement of the writing. Based on the

classical model of argumentative essay proposed by White & Bilings (2005), introduction has several points to be considered which are lead in, overview of the situation, background, and thesis statement. In line with it, Arnaudet & Barett (1984) writes three points to be considered: establishing context, providing further focus, and providing final clarification (thesis statement).

On the other hand, good means it has coherence and unity. Coherence plays an important role in academic writing. In order to make a successful communication, the discourse should be structured in such a way that will be understood by the audiences (Harmer, The Practice of English Language Teaching, 2007: 276). If the ideas are not developed coherently, the readers may get "lost" while reading the next. Coherence can be achieved using both linguistics and or non-linguistics marker. In writing, usually the coherence is achieved using the coherence linguistics marker, like cohesive devices. When a paper has already been coherent, then unity will also be gotten automatically.

In this research, the writer conducted a research about coherence in introductory paragraphs written by MPBI Widya Mandala Catholic University. Looking at those papers, the writer wanted to know the way students achieved the values of coherence and also coherence devices which were used to achieve coherence in the academic writing introductions.

Research Questions

- What strategies did the students use to achieve the values of coherence in EFL academic writing introductions?

- What devices were used to achieve the coherence of EFL academic writing introductions?

Objectives

- To find out the strategies used to achieve the values of coherence in EFL academic writing introductions

- To find out the devices used to achieve the coherence of EFL academic writing introductions

Significance of the Study

The results of the study provided information about how to achieve coherence in EFL academic writing introductions by using strategies and devices. Besides that, the results were beneficial in giving a confirmation related to the outline of a coherence introduction. For teachers, the results were useful as a reflection about the importance of the teaching of coherence, especially in strategies and devices. For students, the results also provided what kind of strategy and devices which were used to achieve coherence in EFL academic writing introductions.

Theoretical Frameworks

Coherence is a consistent way to make a writing cohere or stick together (Langan, 2008). The coherence in the introductory paragraph is in the flow "track" where the paragraph does not have more than one thesis statement. It means that if an introductory paragraph just has a thesis statement, the thing which should be strengthened is the flow. In line with it, Wright & Hope

(1996: 23) mentioned "Literary texts often seek coherence by more or less elaborate ways of pretending to be other texts – reproducing their typical patterns of vocabulary, syntax, or even physical form."

If writing is categorized as coherent writing, the movement should be logical and smooth. According to Arnaudet & Barrett (1984), there are two strategies to achieve coherence in an introduction: deductive and non-deductive. In line with it, coherence can be achieved using coherence devices like repetition of key nouns, the definite articles *the*, parallelism, purpose signals, substitution, transition signals to link ideas, and logical order of ideas (Arnaudet & Barrett, 1984 and Oshima & Hogue, 2006).

Definition of Key Terms

1. Academic writing

   Academic writing is a short essay for Academic Writing midterm take-home test which students could choose whether to discuss about "The quality of formal education in Indonesia" or "The difficulty in

writing academic English essay". Academic writing is a writing which is built based on facts and evidences to support the ideas.

2. Academic writing introduction

Academic writing introduction is a part of academic writing which introduces the overview of the topic, background, and also the thesis statement(s) that would be developed.

3. Coherence

Coherence is the ideas which are unified and make sense to the readers.

4. Coherence strategies

Coherence strategies are techniques to make ideas related which are developed by writers to achieve coherence in an introduction of a short academic writing essay: deductive, non-deductive, and neither deductive nor non-deductive.

5. Deductive

A kind of writing strategy which allows the writer to explain about a certain topic starting from context establishment, further focus, then ended with a thesis statement.

6. Non-deductive

A kind of writing strategy which allows the writer to explain about a certain topic starting from thesis statement, context establishment, then ended with further focus.

7. Neither deductive nor non-deductive

A kind of writing strategy which does not state any thesis statement in the introduction and or a complete rhetorical strategy.

6. Establishing the context

Establishing the context is providing the background of the topic in the introduction. The function of the context establishment is creating a 'link' to help

reader in identifying the subject or content area of the paper which usually done in one or two sentences either using shared knowledge, a rhetorical question, background information, or a quotation.

7. Providing further focus

Providing further focus is giving more specific discussion about the topic. It focuses more clearly on the aspect of a subject that writer intends to emphasize either using defining/describing, establishing chronological perspective, establishing the relevance of a quotation, or limiting the subject.

8. Thesis statement

Thesis statement is sentence(s) which contain the central ideas of an essay. It describes the purpose of the essay and contains the main ideas that will be developed in the topic sentences of the paragraphs which make up the rest of the essay.

9. Coherence devices

   Coherence devices are words, phrases, or sentences used to relate ideas of an introduction of a short academic writing essay, such as repetition of key nouns, the definite article *the*, parallelism, purpose signals, substitution, transition signals to link ideas, and logical order of ideas.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

   The study investigated coherence of the introduction paragraphs of academic writing papers written by MPBI students who took Academic Writing subject. It was limited to the strategies and devices which were used to achieve the coherent introduction.