

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with the literature related to the topic of this study. More specifically, it discusses the term of transitional phrases, writing as a means of conveying ideas, writing as a product, students' weakness in writing, writing curriculum in Senior High School in Indonesia, transitional phrases as the coherence aspect in writing, types of transitional phrases, and students' lack in selecting transitional phrases.

#### **2.1 The Concept of Transitional Phrases Employed in this Study**

Linguistically, transitional is defined as a changing process from one point to another in a relatively connected meaning (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). Transitional phrases are defined as the phrases which build and improve connection between ideas whether in sentences or paragraphs (Landsberger, 1996). Meanwhile, Wyrick (1999) in Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008) defines transitional phrases are the phrases which link one sentence to another in order to achieve a coherent idea. Thus, transitional phrases are the various phrases which play a role in maintaining coherence aspect in creating and organizing language ideas.

Actually, transitional phrase in this study is just another similar term compared to two terms, such as conjunctions (Halliday and Hasan, 1976), and transitional devices (Weber and Stolley, 1995). Halliday and Hasan

(1976) define the term of conjunction as a cohesive device for "expressing certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse". In line with, Weber and Stolley (1995) explain, "...transitional devices link sentences and paragraphs together smoothly so that there are no abrupt jumps or breaks between ideas." They also elaborate that transitional devices are the words or phrases which role as the bridge that function to bring a particular thought from one sentence to another, from one idea to another, or from one paragraph to another.

The function of using conjunctions, transitional devices, and transitional phrases is essentially same: to connect ideas between clauses and sentences. However, the difference lies on how to place comma and period when using the conjunctions or transitional phrases to connect the ideas. In this case, there should be a comma before using coordinating conjunction, while there should be a period before the second of the two independent clauses (Grammar Exchange, 2003). It infers that the use of transitional phrases could form a new sentence, while conjunctions are to connect two clauses (Insegnanti-Inglese Group, 2012). All the terms do emphasize the same aspect in using language: to maintain coherence among ideas. Through the use of transitional phrases, someone's idea –whether in writing or speaking– could be effectively acquired by the interlocutors.

## 2.2 Writing as a Means of Conveying Ideas

Tarigan (1994) defines that writing is a medium so that people can communicate through visible characters which represent explicit and implicit meanings. Explicit meaning refers to meaning inferring based on the word structures, while implicit meaning refers to meaning inferring by understanding the context of a sentence. Moreover, Coffey (1987) in Sabila (2008) argued that writing is an important means of communication, especially for participating in this modern life (National Commission on Writing, 2003 in Peterson-Karlan, 2011). From the explanation above, writing is defined as the important means of expressing ideas in the form of written language in order to communicate with others.

In fact, writing is not about forming and constructing ideas into written forms, but it is more about stimulating thought (Gould et al., 1989) requiring an amount of time to accomplish the writing itself. Writing is not about free writing, but it is about qualified writing which concerns on the coherence of sentence organizations (Needels and Knapp, 1994 in Graham and Perin, 2007). In this respect, Msanjila (2005: 15) points out, "...Every writing is an activity but not every writing is a skill." This implies that general writing should be distinguished from qualified writing.

An effective writing is the marker of the quality of a writer (Sutarno, 2008). And in order to produce an effective writing, the writer needs to have ability in organizing ideas (Cali and Bowen, 2003). In this context,

organizing ideas is more important than creating ideas in learning writing (Steele, 2004).

Nurhaida (2013) argues that writing activities could lead the students to improve ideas based on their particular field and skill. This situation could make the students motivated to write and, of course, not being forced by any parties. Moreover, writing activities could be started by firstly understanding some figures. Then the students should list important ideas, whether the language use or the topic, to be developed in their writing activities (<http://www.anneahira.com>). This can facilitate the students to get ideas or view for their writing exercise.

### **2.3 The Relationship between Transitional and Writing**

Writing effectively, especially concerning on ideas organization, needs a manner in order to make the ideas easy to understand for readers. In this case, the ideas organization refers to the overall arrangement of written characters in a piece of writing, such as the introduction, the flowing ideas, the sequence, the transitional, and the conclusion (Reid, 2000 in Sabila, 2008). Furthermore, Nunan (2003) in Sumiyati (2009) describes that the language ideas could be logically organized by using transitional phrases to relate prior information to other information.

Based on the statements above, it could be concluded that to make an effective writing, the use of transitional phrases is important in making the ideas well organized.

## 2.4 Writing as a Product-Centered Activity

Writing activity is divided into two aspects: process and product centered (Gabrielatos, 2002; Steele, 2004). Process-centered focuses on how the students write in recursive steps including drafting, structuring, and receiving feedback (Kroll, 1990 in Bacha, 2002). In contrast, product-centered tends to perceive writing as the activity which concerns on the students' achievement by assessing their writing result (Gabrielatos, 2002). Considering the description above, this research focuses on product-centered which determines how the students in the research site write by assessing their writing result.

Writing as a product is defined as a way to measure students' writing outcome with assessment which functions to obtain how far the students could acquire their learning materials (Resmini, 2010). The measurement might use the students' portfolios (Soedjatmiko and Taloko (2003) in Hidayatullah (2012) consisting many types of writing tasks such as dictation, words ordering, gap filling, paraphrasing, and paragraph constructing (Weigle, 2002 in Brown, 2004). In other words, the function of the measurement is to track the progress of the students during the learning.

Related to writing as a product, De Fina (1992) in Bekurs and Santoli (2004) points out that writing could examine students' language development. This is confirmed by Cooper and Brown (1992) in Bekurs and Santoli (2004) stating that through the assessment, the students' writing can

promote reinforcement for their future learning. In this respect, there should be an assessment of any students' writing.

Chen (2007) in Chen (2008) observes that a large amount of recent studies focusing on the improvement of strategy training for foreign language learners have been applied product-oriented. In addition, the important thing of evaluating the training program is focused more on how the outcome of the students will be (Wenden, 1987 in Hasan and Akhand, 2010). And the activity of students' writing should be assisted and monitored by their teacher in order to make the students perform their writing well (Graham, 2006 in Smit, 2010).

A comparison of the way of writing as a process and writing as a product lays on how the writing could start. Steele (2004) gives a comparison of both ways and found that organizing ideas is more important than building up an idea in the early stage of learning. Students tend to get confused if they were asked to write something, but they still did not know what to write at the first time. This situation could waste time during the learning.

In order to enhance the students to be able to write, Steele (2004) proposes four stages in learning to write. First, the students learn a particular text model including highlighting features and language use. A teacher may provide some texts related to a particular topic. Then, they break down and practice important language use being discussed. The teacher may give an example of how to find out and break down the important things of the text,

i.e. the language use. Then, they organize ideas by modifying the language use being discussed. Finally, they can freely start choosing and writing a topic based on their skill and vocabulary level.

Actually, based on Kevin (2009) and Donovan's (2013) explanation, the very first characteristic in assessing and determining good and effective writing is about the idea clarity. Another supportive argument comes from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt institution (2012) which emphasizes the term "idea" as the most important aspect in writing. This could be considered that in determining the effectiveness of any writing, a teacher should firstly consider how the idea is clearly flowing.

Besides emphasizing the idea clearance of students' writing, the assessment itself requires some techniques and components, one of which is by using primary trait assessment. Weigle (2002) in Brown (2003) described that one technique to assess students' writing is through primary trait assessment which determines "how well students can write within a narrowly defined range of discourse". In this concern, Marhaeni (2005) in Marhaeni (2012) points out that there should be some components during the assessment session in order to obtain the total score objectively of the students' writing.

In determining the components for assessing the students' writing, there should be a consideration in order the components are representatively assessed, one of which is by firstly determining the micro and macro skills of writing. According to Weigle (2002) in Brown (2003), the micro skills of

writing consist of word spelling, purpose relevancy, core of words, word order, tenses, subject-verb agreement, and cohesive device, while the macro skills consist of rhetorical forms, communicative functions, ideas connection, literal and implied meaning, cultural reference, and the use of academic writing.

Considering the level of students' writing which is categorized as intensive and imitative writing task, this study uses some of micro skills to assess the students' writing. The micro skills used are word order, tenses, and subject-verb agreement. However, this study proposes idea clearance as the very first point in assessing the students' writing task.

## **2.5 Students' Weakness in Writing**

Students tend to write incorrectly because they have less knowledge and understanding on how to write correctly. Frederickson and Cline (2002) in Nel & Müller (2010) observe that students need figures and practices about the correct writing so that they make a positive learning situation (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007) in which they can have more practices for their better writing. Also, through the supportive environment, whereas English is accustomed among people, the students could spend more time to perform the target language (Marimova-Todd, 2003 in Nel & Müller, 2010).

Another argumentation came from Applebee and Langer (2006) in Smit (2010) who observe that about two-third of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders still practice



their writing in less than an hour of each week. This can be considered that most students were not accustomed to write. And a worse finding that is about 40 percent of the 12<sup>th</sup> graders were seldom being asked to write a paper of three pages. This can lead to the learners' limited range of language use (Applebee and Langer, 2006 in Smit, 2010). Therefore, the learners should be provided more time to practice their English.

Moreover, Palmer (1994) observes that writing is difficult for students because many writing rules must be applied correctly. Peterson and Karlan (2011) also add that students' lack in writing leads to mechanical errors, irrelevancies, redundancies, early termination, and incoherencies.

Kim (2004), in his study, explains that most of the students' weakness in writing coherently lies on the inability in using transitional phrases correctly. Moreover, Ramasawmy (2004) argues the inability of using appropriate transitional phrases in their writing activities is caused by the misunderstanding of the transitional phrases and the lack of writing practices. This argumentation is supported by Cox and Sulzby (1990) who observes that the use of appropriate transitional phrases indicated the quality of writing and could lead to students' maturation (Ramasawmy, 2004).

In conclusion, the students do need time to write (White and Arndt, 1991 in Gabrielatos, 2002) in accomplishing their complete writing. The students must do their writing exercise not for getting a good writing result, but for understanding how to write. Also, the amount of producing texts

from time to time could motivate the students to have a better writing (Hayes, 2006 in Hartley, 2008).

This also engages the teacher, who is responsible in writing class, to require more writing exercises to his students. As what Smit (2010) argued, the more writing exercises for students are provided, the students will get their writing skill improved.

Even though writing is considered as an important language skill which should be accustomed for each student, many students still face difficulties in writing. One of those difficulties is about the misuse of transitional phrases. This problem must be solved in order that the students can write clearly.

## **2.6 Writing Curriculum in Senior High School in Indonesia**

Nowadays, English has become international language. As what Crystal (1997: 2) clearly stated:

“Of course English is a global language, they would say. You hear it on television spoken by politicians from all over the world. Wherever you travel, you see English signs and advertisements. Whenever you enter a hotel or restaurant in a foreign city, they will understand English, and there will be an English menu. Indeed, if there is anything to wonder about at all, they might add, it is why such headlines should still be newsworthy.”

In Indonesia, English is categorized as a foreign language and it is just applied on particular formal and non-formal education (Marhum, 2009). However, English is recommended to apply as a simple language delivery in each opening session of class and the application of English use could

improve the English language skills of students and teachers as well (Coady and O'Laorie, 2002).

Indonesian schools have been applying School-based Curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan) since 2006. Bezzina (1990: 40) in Bolstad (2004) clearly states that School-based Curriculum is "a process in which some or all of the members of a school community plan, implement and/or evaluate an aspect or aspects of the curriculum offering of the school. This may involve adapting an existing curriculum, adopting it unchanged, or creating a new curriculum." This curriculum itself provides target education, structure, and contents of curriculum based on each educational level (Mulyasa, 2010 in Fitriainingsih, 2013).

One approach in applying School Based Curriculum for English lesson is through genre based in which students learn various English text genres so that they could understand and make their own text after learning the texts figured in previous meetings. A research by Emilia (2008) shows that through genre based approach, the students learned various examples of text which treated them how to make another text by applying lexicogrammatical features: one of them is through conjunctions feature. This could indicate that genre based approach could make the students easy to understand types of text. In addition, the more figures are showed, the more students get familiarized with the texts.

Based on Standard Competence and Basic Competency (Standar Kompetensi and Kompetensi Dasar) in Contents of Curriculum (Standar Isi)

in School Based Curriculum, there are twelve text genres taught in Senior High Schools in Indonesia: narrative, procedure, analytical exposition, hortatory exposition, recount, descriptive, news item, report, spoof, explanation, discussion, and review. This can be considered that most of all text genres are taught in this school level. However, this study concerns on descriptive text genre because it was firstly presented in the high school grades.

## **2.7 Transitional Phrases as the Coherence Aspect in Writing**

Based on <http://about.com>, transitional phrases function to maintain the coherence of written language in order the reader can perceive the meaning as what the writer expects so. As previously stated in Chapter 1, Oshima and Hogue (1999) in Matimi (2011) describe that one of some ways to make a writing composition coherent is by using transitional phrases. In this respect, Castro (2004) in Chen (2008) explains that the transitional phrases could make the writer's flow of thoughts meaningful and clear enough to understand. Therefore, the transitional phrases are the important element in maintaining the smoothness between clauses and sentences. The clauses and sentences could be easy to read and understand if the clause and sentence orders are coherent (Kuo, 1995 in Chen, 2008).

In line with the above perceptions, transitional phrases are described as the link of clauses and sentences (Meyers, 2003 in Sabila, 2008). Moreover, Hacker (2002) in Nordquist (2013), O'Sullivan and Cleary

(2010), Suyitno (2011), and Matimi (2011) point out that by selectively using transitional phrases could maintain the smoothness of combined sentences so that the sentences are easy to read and understand.

The term of transitional phrases in this study refers to some arguments related to the terms which came from Halliday and Hasan (1976) who describe conjunctions as the connectors between general meaning and specific clauses and sentences in a coherent relation. In addition, the transitional phrases refer to the terms of transitional devices (Weber and Stolley, 1995) which is described as the bridge of ideas among clauses, sentences, and paragraphs.

## **2.8 Types of Transitional Phrases**

By synthesizing the types of transitional phrase described by Halliday and Hasan (1976), Landsberger (1996), Steele (2007), Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System (2009), Capella University Writing Center (2009), Possel (2010), and Academic Support Center Writing Lab of Austin Peay State University (2012), commonly there are twelve types of transitional phrases: addition, time or sequence, place, exemplification, comparison, contrast, clarification, cause, effect, purpose, emphasis, and conclusion or summary.

The first type is addition transitional phrases which function to add an amount of information from the previous clauses or sentences. For example:

in addition, and, likewise, too, not only...but also, additionally, also, besides, again, and moreover.

Then, time or sequence transitional phrases function as the time signal among the clauses and sentences. For example: while, after, and then, meanwhile, during, from time to time, later, first, now, at the present time, and until.

Place transitional phrases function to signify the space and place of a clause or sentence. For instance: here, there, wherever, nearby, beyond, adjacent to, above, below, opposite to, and behind.

Exemplification transitional phrases function to clarify the information of a clause/sentence by embedding examples. For instance: to illustrate, for example, specifically, e.g., as an illustration, as an example, in particular, such as, to demonstrate, and for instance.

Another one, comparison transitional phrases which function to compare information between the first clause/sentence and the second one. For instance: in like manner, by the same token, likewise, similarly, in the same way, in similar fashion, just as, neither, comparable to, and in conjunction with this.

Contrast transitional phrases function to give contradictive information between the first clause/sentence and the second one. For example: yet, nonetheless, however, after all, though, nevertheless, but, otherwise, on the other hand, and on the contrary.

Clarification transitional phrases function to give more explanation in order to make the information of the clause/sentence easy to understand. For example: that is to say, to put it another way, seems clear from this, to clarify, to explain, stated differently, in other words, simply stated, in another way, and to rephrase it.

Cause transitional phrases function to give a reason related to the information of a clause/sentence. For example: because, since, on account of, on the condition that, even if, due to, while, because of, in that case, and for that reason.

Effect transitional phrases function to give an impact related to the information of a clause/sentence. For example: therefore, thereupon, thus, consequently, hence, accordingly, as a result, in that case, henceforth, and under those circumstances.

Purpose transitional phrases function to signify the purpose of a clause/sentence. For example: in order that, in order, so, for this purpose, for the purpose of, for that purpose, so that, to that end, to this end, and in order to.

And then, emphasis transitional phrases function to give stronger information from the previous clause or sentence. For example: indeed, certainly, it is important that, for sure, to be sure, it is true that, in fact, of course, without doubt, and it is true that.

The last type is conclusion or summary transitional phrases which function to reformulate the whole information of clauses or sentence in

other shortened clauses or sentences. For example: to summarize, in conclusion, to conclude, finally, ultimately, in a summary, to sum up, in brief, in summary, and in short.

## **2.9 Students' Lack in Selecting Transitional Phrases**

One problem making students difficult in using transitional phrases is because the students alone have not been familiar with all transitional phrases (Kim, 2004). This could happen if the students actually did not understand clearly what transitional phrases and how to use the phrases in their English writings.

In this case, the students must understand about text knowledge before doing writing (Victori, 1999 in Xinghua, 2010). The text knowledge may consist of topic interest, clarity of ideas, coherent discourse, and grammatical correctness (Carter, Lillis, and Parkin, 2009: 123).

Another problem causing students face difficulties in selecting the appropriate transitional phrases between sentences is about the use of same type transitional phrases in different sentences. In this case, the students face difficulties in selecting similar transitional phrases to connect different sentences even though the sentences point the same idea (Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Related to what writing is about, a study conducted by Msanjila (2005) finds out that the secondary school students still face problems in writing. She elaborated that 32 percents of all participants faced difficulties



in maintaining the coherence of sentences. A similar case is described by Tananart (2000) in Ngwa (2012) who found the misuse of transitional phrases still occurred in university students at Chulalongkorn University. His study showed there were still 10.01% of all the error occurred during his study. Far earlier, Mkude (1980) in Msanjila (2005) had argued that many students were unable to organize ideas strategically. This can be inferred that the students, from time to time, whether in high school level or in college level still face difficulties in using transitional phrases of their writing.

Kim (2004), in addition, reported that learning to write for EFL students in Korea is the most difficult thing compared to reading, speaking, grammar, and listening. In his deeper study, the writing difficulties lie on sentence organization which is the most difficult element of other problems, such as contents, language, academic style, and mechanical issue.

A previous study, conducted by Geva (1992) in Lee (2008), found there was a positive impact between university-level ESL students in understanding textual information and their capability in applying the use of transitional phrases. In line with, Goldman and Murray (1992) in Lee (2008) reported a comparison study among native and non-native English students. He observed the ellipsis of transitional phrases could significantly decrease the score of understanding a text among non-native English students while the native students could still perform well. This situation indicates that the use of transitional phrases is important in helping the students, especially

the non-native ones, to understand the information from the use of appropriate transitional phrases.

## **2.10 Conceptual Framework**

The important point of writing is about to write effectively. In this respect, writing effectively requires a high organization in which transitional phrases should be appropriately used to connect the ideas among clauses and sentences in order to make coherent language ideas.

Even though the use of transitional phrases is important in writing effectively, there are still a number of students face difficulties in using the transitional phrases appropriately. One previous study being concerned is the study conducted by Kim (2004) in Korea. Kim observes 32 Korean students of a private language institute who were asked to make English writing and to answer the questionnaire. The findings show that organization aspect is the most frequent error occurs in the students' writing compared to grammar, word choice, content, and mechanics. The findings also corresponded to the questionnaire result which shows that organization is the most difficult aspect for the students.

Considering what Kim (2004) observes, this study concerns on finding out whether the use of transitional phrases of the tenth-grade students' writing of SMA IT Darul Hikmah (YAPIDH) Bekasi is high or low and what types of transitional phrases mostly used by the students.