

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the present study. It presents the background of the study, the formulation of research problems in the form of research questions, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, and organization of the thesis.

1.1 Background of the study

In presenting ideas in writing, students should be encouraged to make sure that their text flows through a sequence of sentences. Hence, it is fundamental to direct them to the ideas they wish to express, as well as the sentences they use to express those ideas (Holloway, 1981; Frantzen, 1995; Chandler, 2003). In order to make the sentences readable, they should be connected to each other because a good sentence or text is not determined by its length but it depends on its connectedness and its unity (Brostoff, 1981; Cox et al., 1990; But et al, 2006). Therefore, EFL teachers should guide students to compose many kinds of texts.

A text can either be written or spoken (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Matthiessen, 2004; Butt et al., 2006). A text stands for a complete linguistic interaction from beginning to end as the manifestation of any instance of language that makes sense to someone who knows the language (Eggins, 1994; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). This suggests that the fundamental in a text is not its length or medium but its meaning or sense to be identified by its receivers. For this reason, as it is aforementioned by Halliday and Hassan (1976 cited in Eggins, 2004) text is best regarded as a semantic unit, a unit not of form but of meaning.

Moreover, the text should have texture that makes words ‘hang together’ or become fixed meaningfully in a unity of text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). It is in line with Eggins (2004), i.e. that texture refers to the interaction of two components which

are called coherence and cohesion. Hence, to be a text, those minimum units of meaning should be related in a coherent and cohesive way. The coherence of the text is determined by the connection between its social and cultural contexts while cohesion is the way the text's elements are bound together as a whole. In other words, a text is a passage that becomes meaningful because its coherence and cohesion are intertwined to create the text as a whole. Texture will help readers to understand the semantic relation of the text. Furthermore, the writers' knowledge of semantic relation will potentially determine readers' comprehension (Allison, 1989; Keppner, 1989; Fulcher, 1989; Gersbacher et al., 1990; Crewe, 1990; Thompson, 1996). Hence, writers should have the ability to master the concept of texture.

Cohesion is, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), one of the crucial aspects of texture to improve the connectedness and unity of sentences in a text. It is fundamental for the students to join ideas between sentences to create texture (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Cohesion is one of the fundamental elements of texture defined as non-structured resources for discourse to hold the text together and give the text a meaning (Halliday, 1994). Cohesive devices enable a text to preserve consistency and connectedness throughout a passage. Cohesive devices are texts-specific linguistic elements employed to assemble an integrated, interpretable, and meaningful text. Cohesion is achieved through cohesive device domains, i.e. reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). These domains intertwine the text together into a unified whole to help the readers understand the text.

With regard to the discussion above, this study analyzes the use of lexicogrammatical cohesion as one of the linguistic functions. Cohesion is chosen as the subject of the study because it refers to the quality of a text such that it appears as a single unit, not as random sequence or thoughts or sentence. In other words, cohesion is the connection that results when the interpretation of a textual element is dependent on another element in the text. It is relevant with Bussmann (1998) that coherence has

to do with mental processes and cultural knowledge rather than any explicit discourse markers such as deictic words or linking words. The fundamental difference between cohesion and coherence is that coherence relies on semantics of a given text as well as cultural knowledge and the overall context in which discourse is unfolding. There is no explicit manifestation of textual coherence in a text itself. Coherence is rather deduced from a text. In this study, concrete textual elements are manifested through data in form of students' expository writing. Cohesion enables students to create a text as a single unit which is dependent on another element instead of understanding random sequence or thoughts or sentence (Connor, 1984; Crowhurst, 1987; Chen, 2008). The students also tend to understand explicit context rather than implicit one (Hartnett, 1980; Haratyan, 2011;). This tendency becomes the reason why cohesion is selected as topic of the study. Cohesion focuses on explicit context which the students can easily understand. On the other hand, coherence puts an emphasis on implicit one which somehow causes them difficult to understand the context (Fitzgerald & Spiegel, 1986).

Therefore, the study puts an emphasis on the use of cohesive devices in students' expository writing. It covers the variety of cohesive devices used by the students to create semantic relation; and to reveal the contribution of cohesive devices to students' expository writing. This study uses the concept of cohesive devices as its analytical framework, as brought forward by Halliday and Hasan (1976).

There have been studies focusing on the use of cohesive devices in different countries where English is taught as a foreign language. The studies put an emphasis on grammatical cohesion applied by undergraduate students in their argumentative essays (Xu, 1996; Wang, 1998; Wang, 2005; Alarcon and Morales, 2011), students' ability in building cohesion in their writing through the use of cohesive devices (Khalil, 1989; Wikborg, 1990; Abdul, 1995; Olateju, 2006; Sadighi, 2012; Rahman, 2013), lexical cohesion used by the students in their writing (Kano & Yasuko, 1989; Ferris, 1994; Koshik, 1999; Jin, 2000; Murphy, 2001; Normant, 2002; Xuefan, 2005; Oh, 2009), coherence structure and lexical cohesion applied by students in their expository

text (Granger, 1996; Palmer, 1999; Berzlanovich, Egg, and Redeker, 2008), cohesive devices used by the students in their argumentative essays (Field & Yip, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Norment, 1994; Lee, 2002; Al-Jarf, 2011; Yang and Sun, 2012), problems faced by the students concerning the use of coherence and cohesion in their writing (Ahmed, 2010), types of grammatical cohesive devices used by the students in their thesis writing (Abdurahman, Wijaya, & Salam, 2013), coherence and cohesion in undergraduate students' thesis writing (Mardhatillah, 2013), the realization of cohesion in students' argumentative writing (Saudin, 2013), cohesion and coherence in students writing among second graders of senior high school (Seken, Suarnajaya, & Suarnajaya, 2013), and cohesive ties applied by the students of senior high school in their expository essays (Asikin, 2013). Most of the previous studies used the concept of cohesive ties based on the theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976).

The phenomenon of cohesion and coherence in L2 English writing has been the focus of attention for several researchers in different nations. However, those studies commonly put an emphasis on the use of cohesion in various texts and genres. Most of them are conducted at university level. There are only two studies conducted at senior high school level (Seken et. al., 2013; Asikin, 2014).

Although, the present study and Asikin (2014) are conducted at senior high school level, there is a difference between both of them. This study focuses on types of cohesive device applied by the students and how cohesive devices contribute to their writing. On the other hand, Asikin (2014) puts an emphasis on different contribution of cohesive devices to their texts' cohesion. Furthermore, this study presents four contributions of cohesive devices in students' expository writing i.e. keeping track of the participants, avoiding repetition and text redundancy, enhancing logical connection between parts of texts, and engaging the readers to the core argument of the text, while on the other hand, Asikin (2014) delineates five contributions of cohesive devices in students' expository writing i.e. keeping track of the participants, pointing to something within or outside the text, substituting of one item by another, connecting the preceding

part with the next part systematically, and investigating the repetitive sequences of lexically linked items and their relation to the core sentences.

Exposition genre is chosen, as the manifestation of how language is structured, because this type of genre stimulates the writer to pose several perspectives toward a phenomenon (Feez and Joyce, 2002; Derewianka, 2004)

. In presenting perspectives, cohesive devices are required to show writer's position by applying personal pronoun i.e. I, you, we, they, he, she, it, etc. Furthermore, in order to associate the reasoning, particular conjunctions as the manifestation of cohesive devices are fundamental to enhance logical connection between parts of text. Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the cohesive devices applied by students and their contribution to their expository writing.

1.2 Research Questions

In line with the background aforementioned, this study attempts to address the following research questions:

1. What types of cohesive devices are identified in the students' expository writing?
2. How do the cohesive devices contribute to the cohesion of students' expository writing?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the types of cohesive devices in the nine students' expository writing, and
2. To reveal the contribution of cohesive devices to students' expository writing.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The present study is expected to be useful for theoretical, and practical purposes. Theoretically, the results of the study are expected to offer new information to the investigation of cohesion in students' writing, in particular exposition text. Practically,

the results of the study are expected to be useful for teachers, students, and policy makers. For teachers, the results of the study are expected to give clear description of some characteristics of students' texts. Furthermore, it is able to assist teachers in improving the quality of teaching by considering the importance of cohesive devices. For students, the results of the study are expected to enhance students' competence in creating a good text particularly an exposition text. Finally, the results of the study are expected to be useful for policy makers, especially *Dinas Pendidikan*, in assisting and facilitating English teachers to have sufficient knowledge of essential components of writing particularly cohesion, which will in effect result in good learning.

1.5 Definition of Terms

The study involves several terms in exploring the phenomena investigated. The terms need to be clarified in order to avoid misinterpretation. Each term is clarified as follows:

a. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a worldwide theory of language developed mainly by M. A. K. Halliday during the 1960s in UK and later on in Australia. Mostly, it has been used in language education and discourse analysis. It does not look at the mental process of language, but investigates the produced discourses and their context of production and pays much attention to language function (Martin, 2009: 154). It provides a very useful descriptive and interpretive framework for viewing language as a strategic, meaning making resource (Eggins, 1994). SFL involves the notion of cohesion, the focus of the present study.

b. Cohesion

Cohesion refers to linguistic devices available to relate between information in a text such as words, phrase and clauses and other items such as pronouns, nouns, and conjunctions to help the text flow together (Paltridge, 2006;

Knapp and Watkins, 2005). Cohesion is the semantic force, or rather the set of semantic forces, which hold a text together beyond the reach of grammatical structure. The devices which create cohesion are partly grammatical and partly lexical. The grammatical resources are reference, ellipsis (including substitution) and conjunction. The lexical resources are the taxonomic relations (synonymy/antonymy, hyponymy, and meronymy) and collocation. Each occurrence of cohesion in a text is called a “cohesive tie” (Halliday & Webster, 2009: 241).

c. Cohesive Devices

Cohesive devices are linguistic features which can be identified as contributing to make sequence of sentences a text (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Cohesive devices are classified into five categories: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). In this study, all those cohesive resources that belong to the theories of pattern of cohesion are explored.

d. Exposition Text

Exposition text is a type of argumentative text which is defined as a type of the text that is used to both explain and interpret, which also presents more than one argument in favor of a judgment (Martin, 1985; Derewianka, 2004; Pardiyo, 2007). In this study, students are asked to write this genre as the manifestation of how language is used and structured.

1.6 Organization of the Thesis

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the present study by presenting the background of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms, and organization of terms. Chapter 2 examines theories related to the present study, especially ones that are used as the theoretical framework. Chapter 3 explains research methodology, which covers the

research design, research site, research participants, data collections, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents analysis of data and discussion of the findings. Chapter 5 concludes the present study and offers some suggestion.