CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background, research question, objective, and significance of the study. This chapter is divided into the following sections: the background of the study, the research questions, the aim of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the definitions of key terms, and the organization of the thesis. In this following part, I elaborate the rationale for conducting the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is said to be one of the most important language skills for English language learners not to mention university students. Zhang (2013) explained that writing, aside from its role in language learning, is considered as the most prized academic skills. In addition, writing skills are also crucial for students' future academic experience, since as Hayward (1994) and Sasaki (2007, 2011) explained, writing skills have been deemed as the most important aspect for academic success needed by students studying abroad. Zhang (2016) also added that most students studying at tertiary level are assessed to pass or fail their courses by writing (Wu & Zhang, 2017). Regardless of the students' specific field of study, writing skills development always becomes an element of any language teaching curriculum. Additionally, the importance of writing skills for language acquisition has been reconsidered by the post-communicative turn in English methodology (Rus, 2016).

One crucial aspect that has to be present in a text is cohesion. It constitutes the indication that sentences are linked one to the other, and thus, according to Halliday and Hasan (1976), differentiates a text with what is not a text. The connecting feature carried by cohesion is what enables the writer and the reader to communicate. Cox, Shanahan and Sulzby (1990) propose that cohesion is significant for both the reader and the writer of a text in which it is beneficial, for the former, to produce a text that can be easily comprehended, and for the latter, to construct the meaning from a text. Further, Cox, Shanahan and Sulzby (1990) explain that cohesion is the connection

between elements of a text by the use of repetition of information at the levels of semantic, syntactic and discourse structure. It means that cohesion is a very general concept that has to be studied by paying attention to a considerable number of aspects. Halliday and Hasan (1976) propose five aspects that build cohesion in a text consisting of reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion which are called as cohesive devices.

The cohesive device that becomes the focus of this study is the conjunction. Some researchers emphasize the importance of conjunction (McClure & Steffensen; 1980, Goldman & Murray, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Lorenz, 1997). McClure and Steffensen (1980) suggest that conjunction is one of significant linguistic elements that is used to communicate information in written context. It constitutes a signal that makes the relationship between statements in a text explicit. McClure and Steffensen (1980) add that authors failing to make sensible application of conjunction will make their readers guessing about the connections between the ideas they have made. Other researchers claim that skillful use of conjunctions is important for measuring language proficiency of both native and non-native speakers' writing development (Goldman & Murray, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Lorenz, 1997). Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize the importance of conjunction by explaining that they do not primarily constitute devices to connect the preceding (or following) text, but more than that, they deliver particular meanings that indicate the presence of other aspects in the discourse. Fahnestock (1983) suggests that deploying conjunction in a text should go hand in hand with sufficient understanding of the rules; where conjunctive items are supposed to be put.

Despite this, the use of conjunction in second language learners' writings is deemed to be problematic. Yeh and Yu (2004) conducted a research finding that there was inappropriateness in students' compositions and one of the sources of the inappropriateness is the use conjunction. In line with this, Yeung (2009) found inappropriate use of the word *besides* in the second language learners' compositions in which it is employed by the second language learners in very different ways from the one by native speakers or experts. Next, Lee's study (2013) also found a number

of problems regarding conjunction use in Korean writers' texts which were overuse and underuse of several conjunctive items. The problems found in the research conducted by Granger and Tyson (1996) were underuse of *however, therefore* and *thus* and overuse of *moreover, for instance* and *on the contrary* in French English learners' texts. After that, The study of Hinkel (2002) contributed another findings that in the essays of L2, there was found an overuse of *and, but, yet, either, or* and *both* compared to L1. At last, the study conducted by Li (2009) revealed that there was an overuse of *but* in 20 Japanese EFL journal writings at the university level. Based on the facts, it can be inferred that the use of conjunction is still considered problematic.

In Indonesian context, there are several studies that analyzed the frequency of using cohesive devices, not to mention conjunction, among university students. The study of cohesion by Rahman (2017) investigated the grammatical cohesion on university students' academic essay writing. The specific aspects being analyzed cover grammatical cohesive features, the frequent types of grammatical cohesive features and the causes of the students' committed incohesive writing. The results showed that the most frequently used cohesive feature is reference (56.3%) and the least one is substitution (0.5%). The findings also indicated that the students had adequate knowledge regarding the use of grammatical cohesive features approximately (721) compared to the inappropriate use around (128). In addition, the cohesive feature which is most frequently used inappropriately is conjunction (72.7%). It is suggested in the study that the causes of inappropriateness in the use of grammatical cohesive features are mother tongue interference and overgeneralization.

The study conducted by Emilia, Habibi and Bangga (2017) investigated the cohesion of eleventh graders' exposition texts. In the study, the texts were analyzed using the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) in which the specific aspects being scrutinized were Theme progression and cohesive devices. The study found that the texts indicated students' ability to grasp and understand the schematic structure of exposition texts such as thesis, argument and restatement of thesis. The findings also suggested that the texts show students' potential capability to build cohesion at the

clause level since they were able to use the zig-zag and the Theme reiteration successfully. Further, the study revealed some virtues of the high achiever's text.

Some other researchers (Liyana, 2014; Suningsih, 2016; and Nilopa, Miftah & Sugianto, 2017) conducted study on the similar topic. Liyana (2014) studied the cohesion and coherence in three students' theses. Suningsih's (2016) study investigated the types of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices and the appropriateness of cohesive devices in students' writings. Nilopa, Miftah, and Sugianto (2017) conducted a study investigating the types of cohesive devices employed in university students' expository essays. However, little attention has been paid to how cohesion is built through the internal and external conjunctive relations in university students' expository texts. This study aims at filling the gap by investigating the realization of cohesion through the internal and external conjunctive relations in EFL learners' expository texts.

1.2 Research Questions

The problems in relation to cohesion and coherence found in a number of studies become an urge to give EFL students further understanding about cohesive devices, especially conjunction. Specifically, the research question of this study is as follows:

1. How is cohesion realized through the internal conjunctive relations in EFL learners' exposition texts?
2. How is cohesion realized through the external conjunctive relations in EFL learners' exposition texts?
3. How is cohesion realized through both the internal and external conjunctive relations in EFL learners' exposition texts?

1.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the research questions formulated, this study aims at:

1. Analyzing how cohesion is realized through the internal conjunctive relation in EFL learners' exposition texts.
2. Analyzing how cohesion is realized through the external conjunctive relation in EFL learners' exposition texts.

3. Analyzing how cohesion is realized through both the internal and external conjunctive relation in EFL learners' exposition texts.

1.4 Significance of the Research

Theoretically, the findings of this study are expected to provide additional knowledge and information for the further research in relation to the realization of cohesion through the internal and external conjunctive relations. Practically, for teachers, this study is expected to give another insight to evaluate cohesion realized through conjunctive relations in EFL learners'. For students, this study provides information regarding the appropriate and inappropriate realization of cohesion through conjunctive relations. Also, the results of this study can be used as reference for further researchers in the field of conjunctive cohesion.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study analyzes the realization of cohesion through the conjunctive items. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion is a semantic relation which is realized through the lexicogrammatical system. It means that this study takes the semantic system, especially that of conjunction, as the main perspective by paying attention to the lexicogrammatical system; only the most relevant concepts will be taken. Further, this study does not analyze the text from the point of view of expressions or context level.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms
1. Cohesion as a semantic relation
   Cohesion is a semantic relation that between sentences, as it is different from the structural cohesive relation that happen within sentence (Halliday & Hasan, 1976)
2. Internal conjunctive relations
   Internal conjunctive relations take place when two cohesive sentences contain the speaker or writer's attitudes to, judgments or evaluations of phenomena (Halliday & Hasan, 1976)

3. External conjunctive relations

    External conjunctive relations happen when two cohesive sentences contain facts or events taking place in the external world (Halliday & Hasan, 1976)

4. Exposition text

    Exposition text is a part of the arguments genre that has a particular stages covering thesis, arguments and reiteration (Rose & Martin, 2012).