CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on investigating students' analytical exposition text in terms of its utilisation and organisation of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive devices. This chapter is centred on providing elaborative background information of why this study is conducted, the research questions, the aims, the scope, as well as the significance of this study. In addition, clarification of key terms and organisation of the paper are also presented in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Writing is the core fundamental aspect of language, specifically when it comes to its implementation in the educational field (Al Badi, 2015; Huy, 2015). According to Huy (2015), writing supports students to hone their other three skills of language, namely, reading, listening, and speaking skills. Through writing, students could concentrate more on their own listenability to refine their revision skills by reading their text aloud or requesting their friends to do so, not to mention that it could also support them in learning to skim their own paper in regards to looking for key ideas (Huy, 2015). Having a look from educational perspective, writing has become essentially central in education for it allows students to practice their way of conveying information, expressing, and exchanging views in written form which help them prepare to compose academic and professional text in the postsecondary and higher level of education (Al Badi, 2015; Bazerman, 2010).

When it comes to education in Indonesian context, the 2013 Indonesian curriculum stipulates that the English subject serves as one of the mandatory subjects for high school students (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018). This curriculum encompasses several English competencies, one of which is the competence to be able to produce written text. Nonetheless, many Indonesian high school students consider writing as one of the most challenging subjects, especially when they are required to compose analytical exposition text as a mandatory assignment to pass their second year (Alarcon & Morales, 2011; Arianto et al., 2017; Sari et al., 2018). This, according to Emilia et al. (2018) and Bashir (2017) is

due to the complexity of analytical exposition text that belongs to argumentative writing genre which requires them to not only focus on grammar as well as to think creatively and critically, but also to construct their text as logically cohesive and coherent as possible. The complexity of writing exposition text does not end there as other factors such as different structure and nature of students' first language, and the English language (target language) also contribute to students' writing skill in constructing analytical exposition text (Hawes & Thomas, 2012; Othman, 2019). For that reason, students are required to fully comprehend how logical reasoning is constructed as well as to master the suitable way of utilising cohesive devices (Cox et al., 1990).

From the textual metafunction of the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), cohesive devices both grammatical and lexical, play a vital role in written text since they are the tools that bind the texts together (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). They are the features that allow text organisation to flow naturally in students' analytical exposition text. Acknowledging this, Ong (2011), Dastjerdi and Samian (2011) further consider that inaccurate utilisation of cohesive devices in students' analytical exposition text could cause misunderstandings in readers' mind as the information presented are not structurally conveyed. In other words, cohesive devices are the key factor which determines the quality of readability of students' analytical exposition text (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Similar point of view is also shared by Gerot and Wignell (1994), Eggins (2004) and Warna et al. (2019) stating that cohesive devices are essential in creating texture to sentences that are coherent and thus, display the composition of semantic relations in the text. Hence, by mastering appropriate ways in utilising cohesive devices, students will be able to produce comprehensible meaning through their exposition text and elevate the readability level of the text.

Although the realisation of both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices is fundamentally vital in the construction of exposition text, studies circling this issue analysed based on the theory of SFL especially in Indonesian context are still limited and oftentimes excluding the analysis of inaccurate utilisation of cohesive devices. From here emerges a consequence in which students' underlying issues in

employing those devices are left unidentified, leading to no better strategy of teaching to help them overcome it. Studies conducted by Sari et al. (2018) and Heni et al. (2018) for instance, narrowing down the focus to only examine how cohesive devices are appropriately used in exposition text.

Sari et al. (2018) report that students in Indonesian context tend to use more grammatical than lexical cohesive devices in their writing which is in contrast to other studies conducted outside Indonesia. Such studies by Chanyoo (2018) and Meisuo (2000), examining Thai and Chinese students' texts respectively, reveal that in fact the utilisation of lexical cohesive devices weigh more than the employment of grammatical cohesive devices. Though these contrasting results are plausible due to the difference of cultural background the participants of the studies have, other factors such as the exclusion of the investigation of inaccurate use of cohesive devices is also possibly responsible for this. Similar to Sari et al. (2018), Heni et al. (2018) also observe the employment of cohesive devices by solely centring on the realisation of cohesive devices, specifically lexical cohesion, reporting that as many as 95% cohesive devices found in students' texts belong to reiteration type. This means students rely too much on repetition since they have no proper knowledge to replace or substitute them using reference items. Again, this study leaves the inappropriate utilisation of cohesive devices unexplored.

When it comes to studies concerning inappropriate use of cohesive devices while referring to a more global-scope research, Ong (2011) and Nasser (2017) have done that in Chinese and Yemeni contexts respectively. Their studies agree on a conclusion that the utilisation of reference items is the most frequent error done by the students. They affirm that this occurs because students are struggling in choosing when to and not to use reference items; hence, resulting in the overuse of cataphoric reference and the omission of anaphoric reference.

Speaking from Indonesian context, as mentioned previously, there are only a small number of researchers examining students' inaccurate utilisation of cohesive devices, Nindya and Widiati (2020) along with Khairunisa and Savitri (2018) for instance. Their study seeks to find out the underlying factor which contributes to students' inappropriate use of cohesive devices. As anticipated, they report that

students' major problems are in using reference items. Additionally, they conclude that the critical factor causing error in students' organisation of cohesive devices is students' language transfer ability in composing their texts. The result also reveals that the type of reference which becomes a massive obstacle for students is personal reference.

Despite the fact that both Indonesian studies do focus on students' erroneous employment of cohesive devices, it is critical to point out that those narrow down their focus on grammatical cohesion only whilst lexical cohesion is left unexamined. Aware of this, the researcher of the present study looks at the gap and decides to further investigate this matter using SFL analysis, targeting to explore not only how cohesive devices are utilised in students' text but also what kind of error or inaccurate use of cohesive devices the students make both in the field of grammatical and lexical cohesion. Furthermore, this present study explores the utilisation of cohesive devices in analytical exposition text throughout three levels of students' mastery, ranging from low, middle and high achieving level. Thus, the data of the students' use of cohesive devices are rich, various and could represent the overall utilisation of cohesive devices on all level. Moreover, doing these, the causes responsible for the students' inaccurate use of cohesive devices could be identified and further analysed, resulting in a contribution to the development of better pedagogical implications.

1.2 Research Questions

In regards to filling the gap of numerous previous studies mentioned on the previous subchapter, this research was conducted in an attempt to answer the following questions:

1. How do students use cohesive devices in their analytical exposition text?
   a. What types of cohesive devices are used?
   b. Are the cohesive devices used (in)accurately?

1.3 Aims of the Study

In relevance to seek answers for research questions stated on subchapter 1.2, this study is aimed to:

1. Investigate students' use of cohesive devices in analytical exposition text
   a. Find out types of cohesive devices used
   b. Investigate whether or not there are inaccurate uses of cohesive devices

1.4 Scope of the Study

Considering that the topic of analytical exposition text is only taught at 11th grade senior high school level, this study is concentrated on examining six 11th grade Indonesian public senior high school students' analytical exposition texts regarding their utilisation of cohesive devices. This investigation concerning cohesive devices is expanded but is limited to five types of cohesive devices which are categorised into two major categories: grammatical and lexical cohesion. Whilst the former category contains conjunction, reference, substitution as well as ellipsis, the latter deals with reiteration and collocation. In relation to this, the framework used to analyse students' cohesive devices in analytical exposition text is Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The present study is conducted in regards to shining light in both theoretical and practical advantages in the world of English language teaching. The result of this study contributes to the enrichment of todays' English teaching literature concerning the issue of text cohesion and therefore, provides theoretical advantages. For this reason, the findings could broaden the horizon of future researchers in conducting research on students' text cohesiveness in any argumentative writing genre especially exposition text. Also, the findings revealed in this study equip teachers and educators with better understanding of the concept and problems of text cohesiveness faced by Indonesian high school students while learning to compose analytical exposition text.

As for the practical advantages, the result of this study is expected to support English educators in implementing appropriate ways of analysing students' cohesive devices in analytical exposition text based on the SFL theory as well as identifying their inaccurate use of cohesive devices. Along with that, it is projected

to provide insights on how educators should appropriately teach students regarding text cohesion. Furthermore, it is also hoped to be an eye-opener tool for English educators, especially in Indonesia, to not only concentrate on evaluating students' traditional grammar aspects on their text but also to focus on the aspects of cohesion as it plays a vital role in achieving texts' unity and meaningfulness.

1.6 Clarification of Key Terms

A number of key terms are utilised in this study. Thus, it is fundamental for the terms to be defined and clarified in order to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation. Below are the definitions of key terms used in this study:

a) **SFL Analysis** is an analysis of language perceived as a meaning-making tool which are used by people to communicate in a given situational and cultural context. SFL Analysis in this study refers to the analysis of students' cohesive devices in exposition text; hence, belongs to the textual metafunction of SFL.

b) **Cohesion** is the quality of the text in which the information in each sentence and each clause are well-linked and united using cohesive devices; therefore, establishing a sense of text meaningfulness and wholeness. In relation to this study, the term cohesion refers to the cohesiveness of high school students' exposition text.

c) **Cohesive devices** refer to semantic elements which function to link and connect information from sentence to sentence as well as from clause to clause in order to establish text meaningfulness in a united and well-structured writing. For the record, cohesive devices discussed in this study include reference, conjunction, lexical cohesion, substitution, and ellipsis.

d) **Analytical exposition text** is a type of argumentative text which functions to present a single perspective of an issue supported by strong evidence and data, projected to convince and persuade the readers into thinking the same thing as the writer does. Analytical exposition text in this study specifically refers to six analytical exposition texts written by 11th grade students from one of Indonesian public senior high schools in Cimahi.

1.7 Organisation of the Paper

In terms of the organisation of this undergraduate thesis, as many as five chapters are included here. Those are listed as follows:

- **Chapter I Introduction:** This chapter is centred on providing elaboration of background information of why this study is conducted, the research questions, the aims, the scope, as well as the significance of this study. In addition, clarification of key terms and the organisation of the paper are also presented in this chapter.

- **Chapter II Literature Review:** This chapter provides elaboration of the theories used in this study which include theory of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL), Halliday and Hasan's cohesion framework, and exposition text. Furthermore, related previous studies concerning exposition text in SFL are also presented in this chapter.

- **Chapter III Methodology:** This chapter expands the methodology employed in this research. It comprises several subchapters, namely Research Design, Research Site and Participants, Data Collection and Data Analysis.

- **Chapter IV Data Analysis and Findings:** This chapter discusses the findings and data analysis of six high school students' analytical exposition texts. It includes three subchapters that are focused on the realisation of cohesive devices, the inaccurate use of cohesive devices, and pedagogical implications.

- **Chapter V Conclusion:** This chapter sums up the findings of this study as well as concludes the pedagogical implication that is recommended to be implemented while teaching English especially in teaching writing. Moreover, limitation of this study and recommendation for further research are also presented here.