

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the context of academic field, lecturers hence teachers, have responsibilities attached to their status as educators in the higher level of education. One of the tasks is to make intellectual contribution in the form of academic writing such as research, articles, and many others. Academic writing or academic discourse is generally the idea representations which are usually in written forms in the contexts of academics or scholars. One of the indicators of academic discourse is the critical thoughts. To present the critical thoughts, the writer argues contrastive ideas from the experts which are expected to find the truth. To make arguments he does qualified, in terms of the related ideas and the logical order, the writer has to make the composition coherent.

Coherent composition is crucial in academic discourse. Brown et al (1984) state that to be clear with the readers, a paragraph must have coherence. According to Tannen in Reid (1993), coherence is the broad-based concept of the underlying organizational structure that makes the words and the sentences in discourse unified and significant to the reader. One of the strategies to get coherence is by including suitable cohesion. Cohesion is defined as specific words and phrases that tie prose together and direct the reader towards the ideas of the writer (Reid, 1993). Brown et al (1984) name cohesion as transitional words. Transitional words give paragraph coherence because they guide from one idea to another idea without any sudden

jump, but move smoothly from one sentence to the next. Transitional words tell the readers that the writer is giving a similar idea, an opposite idea, an example, a result, or a conclusion.

In several academic writing books, there are examples of using transitional words or conjunctions as the given example below. Rather than presenting the conditions of using particular conjunctions, one of the academic writing books present an example that indicates that conjunctions are synonym or interchangeable as can be seen below:

The British system has a plural executive.

*The American system,
system.*

<i>however in contrast on the other hand</i>
--

has a singular executive

(Arnaudet, 1984, p. 35).

Even though the conjunctions (*however, in contrast, and on the other hand*) used are acceptable based on their functions (this would be explained in chapter two), this way of modeling indicates that all conjunctions in the same class of adversative are interchangeable. This may lead the students to use conjunctions incorrectly as long as the conjunctions show contrast without paying attention to the conditions or the context of the sentences.

The understanding of conjunctions is important since it deals with semantic as Dijk (1977) claims that “Sentences are syntactical objects, and connection (conjunction) is semantic notion.” (Dijk, 1977), which provided by the example as below:

John is a bachelor, so Amsterdam is the capital city of Netherlands. (Dijk, 1977, p. 46)

From the example, we can see that the constraint is semantic and not syntactic; the sentence is well-formed, and for that reason, mastering language is not a matter of syntax only, but also the more important is the semantic.

Another problem of limited knowledge and understanding of conjunctions affects the use of conjunctions. From the pilot project conducted, the writer found two interesting facts. Firstly, a graduate student majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, only made use of very limited types of conjunctions such as *however, on the other hand, and but*. On the other hand, a composition written by a high school student showed more varieties of conjunctions like *but, however, on the other hand, and whereas*. Secondly, what is expected from the advanced student's composition is not only the content, but also the quality of the diction. The level of formality in academic composition affects the use of the conjunctions. Less formal or informal conjunctions should not appear in academic discourse. Halliday and Hasan (1976), gives an example with the adversative conjunction *only*. *Only* is used in spoken discourse or in informal setting, and many times it is reduced or deleted from the utterance. Another informal conjunction is *but*, which is the informal form of *however*. The finding that a graduate student used only limited types of conjunctions and used *but*, the informal conjunction, in the academic composition showed two main problems of using conjunctions: the limited exposure to kinds of conjunctions and also types of appropriate conjunctions.

In this research, the writer would like to focus on adversative conjunctions, the conjunctions that give an opposite idea or to express contrast, because of three reasons. First, in academic articles, contrasting ideas and theories is one of the characteristics of a good academic article. Oshima and Hogue (2006) mention that contrast is a very common pattern in most academic fields. To contrast ideas, the conjunctions used are those which show contrast or adversative conjunctions, this also means that conjunction and genre must be parallel. Granger and Tyson (1996) state that connectors and the types of discourse must be comparable. Adversative conjunctions that show contrast are more likely to appear in argumentative or academic writing, and not in descriptive or procedural text.

The second reason is because adversative conjunctions are more difficult to use by non-native learners. Seale (1978) claims, "... writing a contrast is more difficult than writing a paragraph with support in a series." This claim is proved by Chou (2002) that adversative conjunctions seem to be the most difficult for learners among the categories of conjunctions because the function of different adversative conjunctions is not to give variation in expressing opposite ideas, or can be used interchangeably, but to show the level of contrast. Yee in Borkin (1979) stated that even though there is a similarity between *on the other hand* and *conversely*, it would be misleading to teach students that these conjunctions are interchangeable in all contexts.

The third reason is this study focuses on adversative conjunctions in Indonesian learners setting. The previous study conducted by Rusli Dewi (2003), focused on

cohesive devices where conjunction is one of the five types of cohesive devices, so the study did not discuss adversative conjunctions deeply.

The adversative conjunctions in this study were taken from the introduction part of the academic writing paper written by Indonesian EFL teachers. In the introduction the writer mentions the significance of his study by giving rationale extracted from contrasting ideas from experts and other researchers. This means in the introduction part adversative conjunctions are expected to appear more than in another part of the paper.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to describe the conditions for the appropriateness of several of the most common adversative conjunctions in EFL Indonesian teachers' academic writing paper. By knowing the appropriate conditions, it is expected that this study would bring contribution to the understanding of the language. In order to get the purpose, the writer did in-depth description and analysis on the academic writing composition written by EFL Indonesian teachers.

1.2 The Statements of the Problem

In line with the background of the study above, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- 1.2.1 What types of the adversative conjunctions are used by Indonesian EFL teachers in expressing contrast?
- 1.2.2 Which of those adversative conjunctions are erroneously employed by Indonesian EFL teachers?

1.2.3 What are the possible causes of the errors in using adversative conjunctions?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

Based on the questions above, this study is intended to:

1.3.1 Find out the types of adversative conjunctions used by Indonesian EFL teachers in expressing contrast.

1.3.2 Find out the adversative conjunctions which are erroneously employed.

1.3.3 Find out the possible causes of the errors in using adversative conjunctions.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

Academic discourse is about presenting ideas in written forms by making use of the conventions of discourse and authorities' point of view. One of the conventions of discourse is coherence. To make a coherent composition, the writer can use conjunctions to link ideas. In the introduction part, where the writer argues and contrasts authorities' ideas, he can make use the adversative conjunctions.

Conjunctions are described by Halliday and Hassan (1976) under the groupings of additive, adversative, causal, and temporal conjunctions. In this study, the writer focuses on adversative conjunctions. The categories set by Halliday and Hasan are adopted by Murcia and Freeman (1999) which are adjusted to the current language features. In this thesis, the writer uses the category by Murcia and Freeman because the classification in Halliday and Hasan model makes distinction between internal- and external relations, which are disregarded. Internal relations are the

implicit intentions between the speaker and the interlocutor which are not uttered. In contrast, external relations are the intentions that are uttered clearly. In written discourse, every intention must be stated. Therefore, internal relations are disregarded in this study.

1.5 The Significances of the Study

It is expected that this study will give:

- A contribution for Indonesian EFL teachers to use conjunctions especially the adversative conjunctions appropriately in their academic writing.
- A contribution for Indonesian EFL teachers to teach the function of conjunctions especially the adversative conjunctions by giving more exercises to use them in the writing

1.6 The Scope and Limitation of the Study

Considering the limitation of time, the writer intends to limit the scope of her study as follows:

- The data used in this study were the introduction part of the academic journals written by EFL Indonesian teachers. The discussion of adversative conjunctions in introduction part cannot give the complete input on how the writers use the adversative conjunctions in the whole composition. Therefore, this is considered as the weakness of this study.

- The data were taken from the published journals ranging from 2002 – 2011.

1.7 The Definitions of Key Terms

Before further discussion, it is necessary to define some key terms used in this study:

a. Adversative conjunctions

Adversative conjunctions are words or phrases that are used to show the contrary to expectation which derived from the context (M.A.K. Halliday, 1976).

b. Indonesian teacher

A (Indonesian) teacher is professional person owning the main responsibility to educate, teach, guide, lead, train, assess, and evaluate the learners in formal early education, primary education, and secondary education. (PP RI No. 74 Tahun 2008 tentang Guru)

c. Academic journal

Academic journal is a periodical articles written by a researcher or expert in the field who is often affiliated with a college or university. The writing in academic journal is area under discussion to a peer-review process, which means that other experts in the field evaluate the quality and originality of the research as precondition of publication. Academic journal is typically

published by a academic association or a university press.

(library.queensu.ca/webisi/survivalguide/glossary.html)

d. Academic writing

Academic writing is presenting ideas in written forms by making use of the conventions of discourse and authorities' point of view.

e. Introduction

Introduction is a part of an essay that informs the readers what the writer wants to carry out as a topic of the study and also a brief description of the importance and significance of the study.

(<http://overnightessay.com/blog/2007/10/01/thesis-introduction-writing/>).

f. Error

Error refers to any deviation from a selected norm of the language performance.