

The Use of Cohesive Device in Writing Cause and Effect Essay

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Abstract

This study investigated the cohesive errors I composing essay writing done by undergraduate English Department students of University of Muhammadiyah Gorontalo, Indonesia. In elucidating the students' difficulties in using cohesive devices, the researchers examined the cohesive errors both quantitatively and qualitatively. This study was analyzed based on an error analysis paradigm and Halliday and Hasan's cohesion framework and taxonomy. The quantitative analysis investigated frequency and the percentage of cohesive errors and also the types of cohesive errors committed by the student. The qualitative analysis investigated linguistic a description and the explanation of the cohesive composed by the students.

Keywords: *Writing, cohesive devices, error analysis.*

Introduction

It cannot be neglected nowadays that English has become the widely used language globally. The dominant English in the world is due the fact that English is the *lingua franca* of international trade, diplomacy, science, technology and general information. Moreover, due the status of English as international language and advancement in technology, there has been a huge demand for learning English in recent years mainly for academic purpose (Jordan, 1997) and now the student are required to be competent in reading and writing in English for its academic purpose.

Written language provide many purpose writers and reader, and also for individuals and communities. According to Dudley-

Evans and St. Jones (1998), the importance of writing is much more crucial in university settings because students are increasingly required conducting their study in English and the students much require enough knowledge to adequately produce specific writing genres such as essay, summaries, critical reviews, and research paper.

Writing is considered as the most difficult skill among the four skills in language learning for English as a Foreign Language learner since it is active and productive skill. This skill requires thinking strategies that allow the individual to express his or herself competence in the other languages. It is also a complex activity that requires a certain level of linguistics

knowledge, writing conventions, vocabulary and grammar (Erkan and Saban, 2011).

The writer should use cohesive devices in order to get good writing. In terms of the communicative nature of writing, cohesion is regarded as an essential textual component not only to create organized text, but also to portray the content comprehensible to the reader. When sentence, ideas and details fit together clearly, reader can follow along easily, and the writing is coherent. The ideas tie together smoothly and clearly (Hinkel, 2001).

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion is defined as the “relation of meaning that exist within the text” and “it occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another”. They also propose that there are two common forms of cohesion: anaphora and cataphora. Anaphora refers to the presupposition of some elements that has been mentioned before, while cataphora refers to the presupposition of some elements that is to follow. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are five major cohesive devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjugation, and lexical cohesion. Each category is classified into a number of sub-categories.

Reference uses personal pronouns, demonstratives and comparatives to establish a cohesive item and its antecedent. “The replacement of one item by another” is referred into substitution while “omission of

an item” is referred to ellipsis. Conjunctive cohesion can be existing within and between sentences. Lexical cohesion consists of two major types: reiteration and collocation. A reiterated item may be repetition, a synonym or a near-synonym, a superordinate or general word. Halliday and Hasan (1976) further describe cohesion in collocation is about the linking of lexical items that often co-occur in a span of text.

In her study on *investigating the use of cohesive Devices by Chinese EFL Learners*, Ong (2011) identified the text made by the learners in order to detect a cohesive error then classified the errors into some types based on Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) taxonomy: (1) misuse, (2) unnecessary addition, (3) omission and (4) redundant repetition of cohesive devices. The subject of the research was a group 20 Chinese EFL learners were from a class of an Intensive English Course (of one year duration). One of the results of the study found that there were a total of 140 cohesive errors in the ten expository. It was also shown that reference had the highest percentage of errors, followed by conjunction, and lexical cohesive errors.

The results Ong’s study has encouraged the present study. Exploring further the findings of cohesive devices usage was challenging because Ong’s findings’ were in contrast to Chen (2008) who was investigated the use of cohesive devices by EFL students in Taiwan. He

found that student use Reference, conjunction and lexical cohesive devices in writing with the highest percentage was lexical devices, reference devices and the last was conjunction.

There was a lot of study regarding cohesive devices usage done by EFL learners in writing many Chinese students were being investigated as they are claimed to have the largest English learning population (Cheng, 2003; Jiang, 2002; You, 2004. In Ong, 2011). Nevertheless, Indonesia also has a large number of English learning populations since English has been taught since in a very beginning level of education. This present study is intended to investigate the use of cohesive devices by undergraduate student of UMG in composing persuasive essay writing. Research questions were formulated as follows: (1) what kinds of cohesive devices are used by college students? (2) How frequently are the cohesive features?

Ong had done her research by analyzing the text then she identified the cohesion devices used by the students and after that she classified the error they made. Ong's research explains the frequency and the percentage of cohesive errors, the types of cohesive errors, and to provide a linguistic description and explanation of the cohesive errors. In the study, the writer was only investigating the kinds of cohesive devices usage, the frequency of cohesive

device usage and the problems occurred when students used cohesive features.

Twenty students of the English Department of UMG were involved in this study. The respondent was the native speaker of Indonesian and learned English as a foreign language. 80% of the students have been learning English Since they were in elementary school, 25% since they were in kindergarten and 5% since they were in junior high school. They were taught writing 1 about one semester, and for the last project they were required to write persuasive essay. The students were asked to choose one of the topics provided; promoting national tourism, educating people in remote area and developing healthy environment. A total of thirty essays from his assignment were collected and analyzed.

Following Ong's study (2011) and Chen's (2008) study, the present study analyzed the data through two procedures: identifying and classifying were based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion. Identifying involved scanning the text to detect a cohesive error. The number of cohesive features that occurred in each category was counted, while the problem and the errors occurred were described.

Adopting Ong's study, these data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis investigated the types, the frequency and the percentage of cohesive used, and also the

types of cohesive errors committed by the student. The qualitative analysis investigated the problem and the explanation of the cohesive composed by the student.

Discussion

Concept of cohesive Device

Cohesion can be defined as the property that distinguishes a sequence of sentence that form a discourse from a random sequence of sentence. It is a series of lexical, grammatical and other relations which provide links between the various part of a text. In studying cohesion we should make a distinction between “linguistic cohesion” and “pragmatic cohesion” or coherence.

Consider the following exchanges:

- 1) John likes Helen.
- 2) She, however hates him
- 3) Do you have coffee to go?
- 4) Cream and sugar?

In the first case the link between (a) and (b) is provided by pronominalization, which is a purely linguistic link: in the second, the connection between (c) and (d) depends on knowledge and experience of the real world.

Linguistic presupposition and pragmatic presupposition differ in similar manner. While in linguistic presupposition the information can be extracted from the linguistic context, in the case pragmatic presupposition, the information is deduced

from outside the linguistic context.

Example: John gave his brother two books.

Linguistic presupposition: John has a brother. Possible pragmatic presupposition: John's brother like books. We shall start from linguistic cohesion. Halliday and Hasan have identified five kinds of cohesive devices in English: Reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

References

the term reference is traditionally used in semantics to defined the relationship between a word and what it point to in the real world, but in Halliday and Hasan's model it simply refers to the relationship between two linguistic expressions.

In the textual sense, though, reference occurs when the reader/listener has to retrieve the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the same context.

Reference to the “shared world” outside a text are called exophoric references. References to elements in the text are called endophoric references.

Only the second are ones are purely cohesive, although both of them are important to create texture. There are times when the reference is not explicit in the text itself, but it is obvious to those in a particular situation. This is called exophoric reference.

For he's a jolly good fellow And so say all of us.

As outsiders, we don't know who the *he* is, but, most likely, the people involved in the celebration are aware of the *he* that is being referred to, and therefore, can find texture in the sentences.

Another type of reference relation that is not strictly textual is co-reference.

A chain of co referential items such as Mrs Thatcher → the Prime Minister

The Iron Lady → Magic reveals that co-reference is not strictly a linguistic feature but depends on real-world knowledge. You need some external information to realize that the terms refer to the same person.

At the level of textual co-reference, there is continuum of cohesive elements that can be used for referring back to an entity already mentioned. This continuum goes from full repetition to pronominal reference, through synonym, superordinate and general word.

I saw a boy in the garden. The boy (repetition) was climbing a tree. I was worried about the child(superordinate). The poor lad (synonym) was obviously not up to it. The idiot (general word) was going to fall if he (pronoun) didn't take care.

Patterns of reference can vary considerably both within and across languages. Within the same language, text type seems to be an important factor in

determining the choice of pattern. Each language has general preference for some patterns of reference as well as specific references according to text type.

Endophoric referencing can be divided into three areas: anaphoric, cataphoric, and esphoric.

Anaphoric refers to any reference that "points backwards" to previously mentioned information in text.

Cataphoric refer to any reference that "points forwards" to information that will be presented later in the text.

Esphoric is any reference within the same nominal group or phrase, a NP That "is formally definite but in fact realizes presenting rather than presuming reference" (pseudo-definite NP in unmarked existential constructions).

Comparative reference

Comparative reference keeps track of identity and similarity through indirect reference using adjective like "same, equal, similar, different, else, better, more", etc. and Adverbs like "so, such, similarly, otherwise, so, more", etc.

A similar view is not acceptable.

We did the same.

So the said.

Substitution and ellipsis

Whereas referencing functions to link semantic meanings within text, substitution

and ellipsis differ in that they operate as a linguistic link at the lexicogrammatical level. Substitution and ellipsis are used when “a speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of a lexical item and draw on one of the grammatical resources of the language to replace the item”.

Substitution

There are three general ways of substituting in a sentence:

Nominal, verbal, and clausal. In nominal substitution, the most typical substitution word is “one and ones”. In verbal substitution, the most common substitute is the verb “do” which is sometimes used in conjunction with “so” as in “do so”.

Let's go and see the bears. The polar ones are over on that rock.

Did Mary take that letter? She might have done.

In clausal substitution, an entire clause is substituted.

If you've seen them so often, you get to know them very well.

I believe so.

Everyone thinks he's guilty. If so, no doubt he'll resign.

We should recognize him when we see him.

Discourse markers and conjunction

A third way to creating cohesion is through discourse marker and conjunctions. Discourse markers are linguistics elements used by the speaker/writer to ease the

interpretation of the text, frequently by signaling a relationship between segments of the discourse, which is the specific function of conjunctions. They are not a way of simply joining sentences. Their role in the text is wider that, because they provide the listener/reader with information for the interpretation of the utterance; that is why some linguist prefer to describe them as discourse markers.

Conjunction acts as a cohesive tie between clauses or sections of text in such a way as to demonstrate a meaningful pattern between them, though conjunction are not tied to any particular sequence in the expression. Therefore, among the cohesion forming devices within text, conjunction is the least directly identifiable relation.

Conjunction can be classified according to four main categories: additive, adversative, causal and temporal. Additive conjunction act to structurally coordinate or link by adding to the presupposed item and are signaled through “and, also, too, furthermore, additionally”, etc. Additive conjunctions may also act to negate the presupposed item and are signaled by “nor, and, not, either, neither”, etc. Adversative conjunction act to indicate “contrary to expectation” and are signaled by “yet, though, only, but, in fact, rather”, etc.

Causal conjunction expresses “result, reason and purpose” and is signaled by “so, then, for, because, for this reason, as a result

in this respect, etc.” The last most common conjunctive category is temporal and links by signaling sequence or time. some sample temporal conjunctive signals are “then, next, after then, next, after that,, next day, until then, at the same time, at this point”,etc. the use of a conjunction is not only device for expressing a temporal or causal relation. For instance, in English a temporal relation may be expressed by means of a verb such as *follow* or *precede*, and a causal relation by verbs such as *cause* and *lead*. Moreover, temporal relations are not restricted to sequence in real time, they may also reflect stages in the text (expressed by *first, second, third*, etc.)

Some language (like Italian) tends to express relation through subordination and complex structures. Others (like English) prefer to use simpler and shorter structures and present information in relatively small chunks. Whether a translation has to conform to the source-text pattern of cohesion will depend on its purpose and the freedom the translator has to reorganize information.

Quantitative Findings (Cohesive Devices Used in Essays)

Thirty persuasive essays were evaluated for the present study. This following table illustrates a general picture of cohesive devices used in 3 essays. There are total 620 cohesive devices used.

From the frequency and the percentage of each subcategory, the participants knew how to use various cohesive devices in their writing, and they preferred using specific categories of devices. For example, participants used lexical item (46, 8%) more frequently than reference (29,6%) and conjunction devices (23,6).

Table 1:
Cohesive Devices Used in Essays

Type of Cohesive Device	Reference Device	Conjunction Device	Lexical Device	Ellipsis Device	Substitution Device	Total Number of Cohesive Devices
Frequency	181	195	244	0	4	624
Mean	6,03	6,5	8,13	0	0,13	20,8
Percentage	29%	31,25%	39,1%	0%	0,64%	100%

There were 325 of cohesive devices errors identified from a total of 620 cohesive devices used by the students in the thirty persuasive essays. In accordance with the most frequent cohesive device used, the errors made by the student were also excessive in lexical devices (141). On the contrary, reference devices which reached the least usage, had the second percentage of errors (109), and followed by conjunction errors (75).

No student used ellipsis device while there were 4 substitution device found and four of them were all correct.

Main Categories of Cohesive Errors	Percentage of Errors
Reference	33,5 %
Substitution	0 %
Ellipsis	0 %
Conjunction	23,07 %
Lexical Cohesion	43,38 %
Total	100 %

Table 2**Qualitative Findings**

Cohesion Devices Errors at a whole and Problems with Cohesive Devices

Fifty two percent errors from total cohesive devices used showed that most of the students were still facing the problems in using cohesive devices. Lexical device seemed to be the most difficult thing for the students since the percentage was the highest. Four example of the students' writing are provided below.

Example 1:

Before we go on, first we must know “ is education is important for us?” and then (then) we must know, what is education? Education is one of activities in our life to get knowledge. Education is the tools to the people to solves our problem. Everybody need something to improve [his/her] their live in the future or next time. Education have two sections [parts], namely: the first not formal education and the second formal education. What is formal and not formal education? Is it [are they] the same?

Formal education is activity to get the knowledge in the school, then [while] not formal [informal] education is activity extracurricular out in the school time. By education, some country can develop skill life in all of parts. Education can help peoples in the world to join [follow] the world modern life. Education is very important for us and all people in the world have time to get that.

In example 1, the student produces various cohesive errors. In line 1 the student used wrong conjunction device, wrote “and then” instead “and then”. Pronoun shift also occurred in line three, the subject is “everybody”, since it is singular, the pronoun is supposed to be “his/her”. While for lexical device error in this example, it can be seen from “not formal”. The student might actually want to write “informal” instead “not formal” but the student does not know.

Example 2:

As we know that many people in a great [big] city most of them make a crack to villager because must villager has low education. It's because villager or people in remote area thinks that education still not important and also maybe, because our government not to pay any attention to them. It can also because their family thinks that it's better if their children help them work than go to school. It's bad opinion. Other reason is because villager or remote area's

people still thinks that that the fee is expensive, they have to buy uniform, bag, books, and other what their child wants [needs].

In example 2, the student made some lexical devices device errors. In first line, the student wrote “great city” while the context actually showed that it should be “large city”. In the sixth lines, the students wrote “... what the children *wants*”, though it is not totally wrong, the appropriate word is “needs”.

Example 3:

People need to go environment along their life. But, unfortunately nowadays there are many disasters around us. There is a flood everywhere, Tsunami in Aceh province, earthquake, etc. The climate does not come at the right at time: dry season and rainy season come late. There is information in television, that some animal (gorilla, elephant, etc) attack people in one of the village or maybe another information that saying about disasters. Do you know why the disaster is happened in our country? One of the reasons, it is because most of the people in our country are not respect with environment around them. As the result you unconsciously destroy our environment.

Example 4:

As the country which has a lot of tourism sites, Indonesia should become one of the tourist destinations in the world. Comparing to another countries, our sites is

competitive enough. We have many beautiful beaches in Indonesia. Bali and Lombok are the most well-known islands in Indonesia which has beautiful beaches. Kute, Legian, Sanur, Pasir putih, nusa dua, etc offer beautiful scenery and beautiful sands. Unfortunately, we have not maximized our tourism site potential yet. Mostly, our tourism sites are not managed seriously. Then, how can we promote our tourism site? Many ways can be done to overcome this problem. The first, we can make some commercial about our tourism sites so other people from other country will be familiar with our country.

One of the common problems found in the students’ writing was pronoun shift. Pronoun shift refers to grammatical error in which the student uses specific kind of pronoun in a sentence or a paragraph and then suddenly shifts the pronoun to another. Such errors not only cause the reader to be confused but also mix up the reference use. In example 4, in the last sentence, after wrote “you” as the subject, the student wrote “our” as the possessive pronoun which is wrong. It should be “your”. In example 5, on line two, the student used “another” while it is followed by countries (which are plural), it supposed to be “other countries” or “another country”.

Conclusions

The result of the present study shows that English Department students employed a variety of cohesive device in their persuasive were the most frequent used, followed by conjunction device, reference device, and substitution devices. While for ellipsis device, no one used this cohesive device. The students also encountered problems in using cohesive devices. Based on the finding, lexical cohesion was the most produced error, followed by reference device and conjunction device. These findings were in contrast to Ong's study (2011), which found that reference caused the greatest errors, followed by conjunction and lexical cohesion. Nevertheless, though it was not identical, these finding support Chen's studies (2008) which found that most of the student use lexical cohesive devices followed by reference devices and conjunction devices.

From the findings, it could be seen that UMG students were still lack of the ability in using cohesive devices especially lexical device since it showed the most produced errors. English lecturers, Indonesian EFL learners and curricula designers are expected to have benefits in term of the practical application. The difficulties of beginning of Indonesian EFL learners in using cohesive devices in their academic writing can enlighten the English lecturers. To make the student aware of the

common errors in using cohesive devices, the lecturers may refer to the common errors in this research result. Indonesian EFL learners would be enlightened by the most common types cohesive errors committed. Further, the curricula designers could employ the findings to construct relevant writing material for beginning Indonesian EFL writers.

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