

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF COHESIVE DEVICES IN STUDENT'S WRITING

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Abstract

This research attempts to analyze a piece of writing written by students of STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau which was problematic in term of cohesion. This research was conducted in form of written discourse analysis. The data of the research was student's writing and it was analyzed based on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976). The student's writing quality is discussed according to the problems by lack of cohesion devices. The student tend to use only a limited range of the many cohesive devices available, her texts appears to be difficult to understand because even the few cohesive devices they utilized were inaccurately used. This phenomenon not only creates disorganized texts but also renders the content incomprehensible to the reader. In conclusion, this research has shown that the student got difficulty in using the cohesive devices and it is needed of attention from the lecturers to give the overall cohesiveness as well in order to increase the quality of student's writing.

Keywords; Discourse Analysis, Cohesive Devices, Writing Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976, P: 3-5), a text is a sematic unit and it has an internal logic relation and a crucial attribute of every text is its unity. The unity that it has is a unity of meaning in context, a texture that expresses the fact that it relates as a whole to the environment in which it is placed. Being a semantic unit, a text is replaced in the form of sentences and this is how the relation of text to sentence can best be interpreted. Hoey (1991) and McCarthy (1991) have explained that studying and applying these devices effectively would lead to cohesion and improvement of the writing's quality. According to Morris and Flirts (1991), "cohesion" is the textual quality responsible for making the sentences of a text seem to hang together".

According to (Thornbury Scott, 2005:23) states that there are a number of ways that are made cohesive in a text, and these cohesive devices (also called linking devices) are traditionally classified at the level of lexis, grammar and discourse (or rhetoric). As Nunan (1993), stated coherence is the sense that chains of sentences or utterances seem to dangle collectively. Coherence refers to the nature of semantic and rhetorical affiliation that underlines texts. Coherence refers to the type of meaningful relationships of the texts. The cohesive devices (Thornbury Scott, 2005:23) includes were lexical cohesion and grammatical cohesion.

Lexical cohesion is the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary Halliday and Hasan (1996:274). Morris and Hirst (2003) put the view that “lexical cohesion occurs when related word pairs join together to form larger groups of related words that can extend freely over sentence boundaries”. These assist in providing the continuity of lexical meaning in a text. The lexical cohesion (Thornbury Scott, 2005:23) was divided in direct repetition, word family, synonyms and antonyms, words from the same semantic field, lexical chains and lists, and substitution with one/ones.

There are classes of grammatical cohesion, which are: reference (pronouns, articles), substitution of clause elements, ellipsis, conjunct, comparatives, and tense.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976:31) state that reference is the specific nature of the information that is signaled for retrieval and the cohesion lies in the continuity of reference, whereby the same thing enters into the discourse a second time. They were categorized in three types: personal, demonstratives and comparatives. Personal references include possessive adjectives, personal and possessive pronouns. For example, the young athletes trained all day. *They* were tired. The item *they* refers to the *young athletes*. Demonstrative references convey locations, e.g., the coach took the young athletes to a restaurant, and they celebrated *there*. Whereas comparative references refer to identity, e.g. I saw two dogs in the street. Then *another* joined and they started barking. The item *another* refers to the *dogs*. Holliday and Hassan (1976) divided references into two patterns: situational

and textual references. The former is labeled exophoric, which “looks outside the text to the situation in which the text occurs for the identity of the item being referred to” (Paltridge, 2012, p. 116). For example, take a look at *this*. The item *this* refers to something both the speaker and the listener can see and understand, but has no meaning outside the context. On the contrary, textual references, known as endophora, refer to something within the text. They are classified into anaphoric references (preceding the text) and cataphoric references (following the text). For example, the book talked about punctuation. *It* was published in 1990. *It* refers to the *book* which is an item mentioned earlier within the text.

Conjunction elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, by virtue of their specific meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into the preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse (1976:226). Since cohesion is the relation between sentences in a text and the sentences of a text can only follow one after the other, in describing conjunctions as a cohesive device, the focus of attention will be on their function in relating linguistic elements that occur in succession together. Furthermore, Eggins (2004) explained: “They express the logical meanings of elaboration, extension and enhancement” (p. 162). Items like however, moreover, firstly, etc., are examples of conjunctions. Bloor and Bloor (2013) grouped them into four classes: additive, adversative, causal and temporal. For example: I was preparing for the party since morning *and* cooking a lot of food (Additive). *However*, I was not exhausted (Adversative). *So* by the end of the day, everything was ready (Causal). *Then*, guests started to arrive (Temporal).

In teaching English in university, the students have to master English academic writing. To produce a good writing, students need to have knowledge of cohesion to make a text communicative; the text is likely to be much more powerful if a writer considers the aspect of cohesion and coherence. Based on the interview to the lecturer of English academic writing, some students got difficulties in generating, organizing, delivering their ideas and using the cohesive devices in their writing text.

Next, the use of cohesive devices in writing was one of the most difficult skills for students of English. Therefore, the writer was interested to conduct written discourse analysis on the use of cohesive devices to the student's writing at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. The objective of this research were to describe cohesive devices are used by students of STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau., to describe the student's problem in using cohesive devices to achieve cohesion and to analyze how the correctness of cohesive devices in the student's writing.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used written discourse analysis to investigate the cohesive ties found in student's writing. The student was asked to write their opinion about the education in Indonesia. The written text belongs to a student of English study program at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. The student had been studying English 3 years at college. The student's writing was taken by the lecturer's based on the average achiever and the result of the writing. The researcher was used Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework to identify and count the number of cohesive devices in the student's text. Then, researcher analyzed and evaluated the writing's quality in terms of cohesion.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of text's Lexical Cohesion

The item *education* was repeated seventeen times. *Indonesia* was repeated seven times including the usage of Indonesian while *people* were repeated three times including the usage of person, unnecessary or inconsistent repetition. *Quality* was repeated seven times. *Teacher/s* was repeated six times which is one time within the usage of teacher in plural. *Government* was repeated three times. *Generation* was repeated twice while *training* was twice. As a result, the writer was used the repetition of certain items in writing. The repetition made the reader to be boring in reading the text.

The words belonging to the same word family, e.g., word that share a common root was *Indonesia and Indonesian, nation and national*. The lexical device synonym was used to reach the better goal of education in Indonesia. The writer provided the synonym in her writing which were “*increase and improve*”. The analyzed data showed that the writer used simple lexical items in convey her ideas and did repetition in her text. Lack of vocabularies and knowledge can be writer’s problem in delivering writing.

4.2 Analysis of text’s grammatical cohesion

Reference is such an important aspect of cohesion-and one that causes trouble to learners. Halliday and Hasan (1976) believe that there are certain items in all languages that have the property of reference. In the English language, for example, these items are: personal, demonstrative, and comparative. The example of reference in text was limited. Student was lack of grammar and vocabulary in exploring her idea in writing. The pronoun *this* as seen in line 9-10 in referring to the whole process described in the text that preceded it, served to bring into sharp focus the point the writer is making. Another difference between this and that is that the former can refer both back and forward in a text, whereas that only ever has back reference.

The function of article *the* was to signal knowledge that was given. For example, “*The purpose of education is to create the quality of person*”. In this case, is because the purpose and the quality have been introduced to reader previously in the text, using the indefinite article *a* to give new information.

Conjunction plays a crucial role in holding a text together.

Table I: The conjunction was found in the student’s writing

Device	Additive	Adversative	Casual	Temporal	Total
Number	3	2	4	3	12
Percentage	25 %	17%	33%	25%	100%

Based on the table I above, there were twelve incidences of conjunction in this text; three of them belong to additive conjunctions, followed by two adversative conjunctions, four items for the casual conjunctions and three incidences belong to temporal conjunctions. The student was interested to use additive conjunctions overtaking 25% of the entire incidences of conjunctions with the total number of three occurrences. There were one occurrences of using *and*. *And* was an instance of a conjunction that was explicit linking word in the text. The student was not used *and* in cohesively to connect two ideas together can be seen in line 3. The item *for example* was used once in the text such as in line 12. The item of *in addition* was used one in text such as in line 15-16. The student was not used appropriate conjunctions as seen in line 4.

The usage of adversative conjunctions was 17% of conjunctions with the total number of two occurrences. An effective example of using *but* cohesively two relations of contrast in the text as in line 7. In term of casual devices, the student used four items and it was about 33% of the entire incidences of conjunctions. Three of them were the usage of *so*, and once for the use of *because*. The student was interested to use temporal conjunctions overtaking 25% of the entire incidences of conjunctions with the total number of three occurrences. The use of *first*, *second*, and *finally* as relations of sequence in time coherently in order to connect or conclude the text together.

5 CONCLUSION

This research was discussed cohesive devices as presented by Halliday and Hasan (1967). The researcher analyzed a student's writing in exploring the effect of cohesive devices on the quality of writing. The student tend to utilize only a limited range of the many cohesive devices available, her texts appears to be difficult to understand because even the few cohesive devices they utilized were inaccurately used. The research reveals that the misuse of cohesive devices is prominent in the

writing. This phenomenon not only creates disorganized texts but also renders the content incomprehensible to the reader. As such, this research has shown the student's difficulty in using the cohesive devices and it is needed of attention from the lecturers.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusion above, the researcher recommends to the English lecturers, students and other researchers. The following suggestions are offered below:

1. The lecturers of English expose students to text rather than to isolated sentence only
2. The lecturers draw attention to, and categorize, the features that bind texts together and provide feedback not only on sentence-level of students' text, but on the overall cohesiveness as well
3. Students should be focused that understanding and using the number of cohesive devices can improve the quality of writing text
4. Other researchers could use it as a reference in conducting the further research

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