Students' Grammatical Cohesion in Essay Writing

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Abstract	:	Cohesion plays an essential part in writing. This study aims to find out what grammatical cohesion device students used in writing. This study is qualitative. It was conducted during the semester. Fifteen university students who studied essay writing participated as participants in this study. The students' writing drafts were collected and analyzed. Content analysis was applied. The results showed that the students use two grammatical cohesion devices in their essay writing; references and conjunction. References consist of personal references, demonstrative references, and comparative references while conjunction consists of additive conjunction, adversative conjunction, causal conjunction, and temporal conjunction. On the other hand, two grammatical devices that were not found in students writing drafts are substitution and Ellipsis devices. Thus, those two devices are mostly found in oral communication. It means that the analyzed passages do not expose all cohesion devices sufficiently and provide too many highlights on one type that is the reference. This fact showed that the sentences within the text should not be connected by the existence of all cohesion devices. Some of the adequate devices were as much as necessary to create a series of sentences called a text. Some presence of them is already enough to create cohesion.

Keywords	:	*Writing, grammatical cohesion, essay writing*

1. Introduction

Students who learn English as Foreign Language (EFL). Writing is considered the most complicated language to be learned in an EFL classroom (Zainurrahman, 2021, 2011). As Brown (2004: 218) in Djahimo (2018) states that among the language skills, writing is the most complicated and the most difficult one. This is supported by Richards and Renandya (2002: 303) in Djahimo (2018) state that writing is considered the most difficult skill for second language learners to master.

Writing is considered a difficult skill in English because producing a good text requires great competencies that students should have, such as grammar, word choice, and organization, organization. Further, having that competence not only leads to the students transferring ideas to a written form that is to be understandable but it is also avoiding readers' misunderstanding. In other words, cohesion plays an important role so that the readers have a clear understanding of the writer's thoughts.

Therefore, cohesion is the key element in writing that leads a writer to deliver readable information to the readers. Cohesion consists of grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. This study focuses on investigating students' grammatical cohesion in writing discussion texts. Writing activities at University are a must for EFL students. Zemach and Rumisek (2005) state that "writing is a very important part of students' university study". Writing means transferring ideas or thoughts through a written form to the readers. It is also stated by White, (19:10) in Astanti., et al. (2016) that writing is the learning process to express ideas, knowledge, experience, or information that is organized in written form.
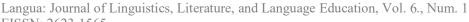
2. Literature Review

2.1 Writing in EFL classroom

Writing is an activity that is very difficult for English learners as a second language. Brown (2004:218) in Djahimo (2018) states that among the language skills, writing is the most complicated and the most difficult one. This is supported by Richards and Renandya (2002:303) in Djahimo (2018) state that writing is considered the most difficult skill for second language learners to master. Writing is a skill used for communication activities. Writing is a sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for language learners Matsuda (2003:22) in Koura and Zahra (2017).

Writing is one of the most important aspects of English language acquisition. Teaching writing has its challenges since there are some steps and requirements that teachers should prepare to undertake in the classroom EFL. in this case, it is quite difficult to master writing, especially for EFL students in Indonesia, since there are some differences between language and English such as structural and grammatical terms and styles. Students' writing in an EFL classroom context should show their awareness of their own communicative goals, of the reader, and the writing context.

Essay writing, which constitutes a problem for many EFL students worldwide, is a major challenge for many students and teachers of English. In teaching writing to EFL students, we as teachers cannot always use writing instruction such as asking the students to write one or two paragraphs regarding a certain topic. Writing skill deals with the ability to arrange the graphic system such as letters, words, and sentences of certain language being used in written communication so that reader can understand the information. The writing skills are complex

and difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgment elements.

2.2 Cohesion in Writing

Cohesion is one important element that is often used in writing a text. Halliday and Hasan (1989: 04) in Masithoh and Fadlilah (2017) state that cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist in the text. Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan explain that cohesion is a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other elements that are crucial to its interpretation of it. Aksan (1999), in Karadeniz (2017) states cohesion defines the grammatical links between the sentences that form the text while coherence indicates the semantic and logical links between those sentences.

For several years, the analysis of cohesion in texts has been a key topic in the study of discourse. Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist within a text. It is part of the system of language which has the potential for meaning enhancement in texts. The most salient phenomenon of discourse is the fact that sentences or utterances are linked together. For this "connectedness", and this "texture", two concepts are used: cohesion, referring to the connections which have their manifestation in the discourse itself.

Renkema (2004:103) in Sunigsih (2016) cohesion refers to the connections which have their manifestation in the discourse itself, and coherence refers to the connections which can be made by the reader or listener based on knowledge outside the discourse. Halliday and Hassan (1976: 04) cohesion occurs in a text when the element of the text is connected. Beaugrande dan Dressler (1981) in Ajam (2018) states that cohesion is all elements connected in a text.

Based on the statement, cohesion is divided into two types: Grammatical Cohesion (based on structural content) and Lexical Cohesion (based on lexical content and background knowledge).
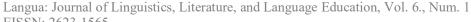
Halliday & Hassan in explain that grammatical cohesion is a semantic relation that is expressed through a grammatical system while lexical cohesion is a semantic relation that is expressed through a lexical system. in other words, grammatical cohesion is semantic relation among elements marked by grammatical devices (a language used concerning grammar). Grammatical cohesion is divided into four devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. While lexical cohesion is lexical relation among parts of discourse to get harmony structure cohesively. Lexical cohesion is divided into two devices: reiteration and collocation. Through these categories, the concept of cohesion, by Halliday and Hassan, emerged as the most comprehensive explanation of the analysis of relationships among sentences within a text.

2.3 Grammatical Cohesion

Grammatical cohesion is very important in writing. According to Halliday and Hassan, there are four resources of grammatical cohesion in English, such as reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction.

2.3.1. Reference

Reference concerns the relation between a discourse element and a preceding or following element. Reference deals with a semantic relationship whereas substitution and ellipsis deal

with the relationship between grammatical units: words, sentence parts, and clauses in the case of reference, the meaning of a dummy word can be determined by what is imparted before or after the occurrences of the dummy word. in general, the dummy word is a pronoun. The referent is the acquisition of special information obtained through the appointment process. Designated information is the meaning, the identity of a particular object, or the type of object designated. Reference is divided into three parts: personal, demonstrative, and comparative reference. The following is a brief discussion on each type of reference.

a. Personal Reference

Halliday and Hassan (1976:37) define personal reference as "reference by means of function in the speech situation, through the category of "person". There are three classes of personal reference: personal pronouns, possessive adjectives (possessive determiners), and possessive pronouns. Generally, the cohesion devices constantly occurring within the text are the reference. The personal reference elements which occur in the text are personal pronouns as subject *I, it, they, we* and as object *them, us* and possessive adjectives *it, my, their,* and *our.*

b. Demonstrative Reference

Demonstrative reference is achieved through location, on a scale of proximity. These demonstratives are also semantically subcategorized into selective demonstratives and non-selective demonstratives. The demonstrative reference elements that appear in the text are neutral demonstrative represented by the definite article *the*, the selective participant demonstratives *this, these, that, those,* and the circumstance selective demonstrative *there.*

c. Comparative Reference

The comparative reference elements which occur in the text are particular comparison through numerative *more*, epithet *better*, *higher*, *harder, hardest,* and general comparison through identity *same*, *different*, *and differently*. Here, is one of the examples of comparative reference.

2.3.2. Substitution

Substitution is used when the writer wants to repeat the same word by using a semantically similar word in the text. Halliday and Hassan, (1976:89) in Khoirunnisa., et al. (2018) define that substitution as the connection of words or phrases which use repetition of *one, ones,* and *same*. Substitution is the replacement of one item by another. It is a relation between linguistic items, such as words or phrases, rather than a relation between meanings and this distinguishes it from reference. In English, the substitute may function as a noun, as a verb, or as a clause. Halliday & Hassan (1976:90) divide substitution into three parts: nominal substitution, verbal substitution, and clausal substitution. Substitution and reference have a similarity in the process, both substitution, and reference equally involve some linguistic item substituted with other items. The difference is substitution involving a broader range of items, not only nouns and pronouns but also verbs and adverbs.

a. Nominal Substitution

Nominal substitution is expressed by the use of the word "one/ ones, same and so.

b. Verbal Substitution

Verbal substitution is the second type of substitution. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976:112), the verbal substitute in English is *do* and it operates as the head of a verbal group, in the place that is occupied by the lexical verb; and its position is always final in the group. Verbal substitution may either function within the same sentence scope or extend across sentence boundaries.

c. Clausal Substitution

The third type of substitution is a clausal substitution, a "further type of substitution in which what is presupposed is not an element within the clause but an entire clause. The words used as substitutes are *so* and *not*" (Halliday and Hassan 1976:130).

2.3.3 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of an item in which the form of substitution is replaced by nothing. In other words, it can be regarded as a substitution by zero. Ellipsis is, thus, a relation within the text; where there is an ellipsis in the structure, there is a presupposition that something is to be supplied or understood, and in the great majority of instances the presupposed item is present in the preceding text. According to Crystal (2008: 166) in Ajam (2018) states ellipsis is a term used in analyzing grammar to refer to sentences where, for economic reasons, emphasis, or style, part of the structure has been removed, and brought back from context control. Same to substitution, the ellipsis has three types: nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, and clausal ellipsis.

a. Nominal Ellipsis

A nominal ellipsis is a detonation that occurs in nouns. Example: Do you want to have another candy? No thanks, that was my third. Based on the above example, it is known that the element that experiences an ellipsis is candy.

b. Verbal Ellipsis

A verbal ellipsis is an ellipsis or absorbing verb. Example: John killed two mice and one snake. In that sentence, the part of the sentence that experiences an ellipsis verb is killed

c. Clause Ellipsis

Clause Ellipsis is an ellipsis or capital absorption and proposition in a sentence. Example: What were they doing? Holding hands. In this sentence, what they omitted was. Examples of elliptical propositions: Who was going to plant a row of poplars in the park? The Duke was. In this sentence, the part of the sentence that experiences ellipsis is going to plant a row of poplars in the park.

2.4 Conjunction

A conjunction is a relationship that indicates how the subsequent sentence or clause should be linked to the preceding or the following (parts of the) sentence. This is usually achieved by the use of conjunctions (also known as connectives). The conjunction is usually used by the writer to ease the interpretation of the text, frequently by signaling a relationship between segments of the discourse, which is the specific function of conjunction. They are not a way of simply joining sentences.

Their role in the text is wider than that because they provide the reader with information for the interpretation of utterance; that is why some linguists prefer to describe them as a discourse marker. Next, Halliday and Hassan classified four types of conjunction. They are additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Each type of conjunction has different markers that show a relation between parts of the text.

a. Additive Conjunction

Additive conjunction contributes to giving additional information without changing information in the previous clause or phrase. By the coordinating conjunction *and,* and other transitional expressions such as *also* and *in addition*, additive or addition conjunction is signaled in the text.

b. Adversative Conjunction

Adversative relation basic meaning is contrary to expectation. The expectation comes from the content of what is being said.46 Adversative conjunction is marked in the text by the coordinating conjunction *but* and other conjunctions such as *however*, *instead*, and *in contrast* that mark the difference or contrast between parts of a text.

c. Causal Conjunction

Causal conjunction marks the relationship between reason, result, and purpose. A causal relationship is marked by expressions such as *therefore*, *as a result*, and *so*. *So* is an informal marker of causation. On the other hand, t*herefore* or *as a result* are used in more formal text.

d. Temporal Conjunction

Temporal conjunction specifies the time sequence relationship which exists between sentences. This temporal relation is expressed in its simplest form by *then*. Besides that, there are still many sequential senses like *after that*, *an hour later*, *finally*, *at last,* and other expressions.

3. Research Method

This research is qualitative research using purposive sampling techniques. Satory and Komariah (2010:50) that purposive sampling used in qualitative research is to obtain data based on the research purpose. It is similar to Alwasilah (2010:149) who states that the researcher can choose the subject of the research in qualitative research because it is based on the purpose of the researcher. Further, Cresswell (2009:178) states that "the idea behind qualitative research is to purposely select participant or site (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question". The data of this research is students' writing draft of the fourth-semester students of a University in north Maluku. Having a clear analysis of data has been collected, this research uses content analysis. Ibrahim (2015: 115) states that content analysis is an approach and method that is used to analyze data and discourse or text becomes the object of the analysis to find the meaning of the messages. The analysis is based on the theory of Beaugrande and Dressler (1981).

4. Findings And Discussion

The obtained data were analyzed using content analysis techniques. The analysis aims to find out what type of grammatical cohesion is used by the students. The analyzed students'

writing draft is based on the theory proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that there are four devices of grammatical cohesion including; references, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. But the findings show that there are only two devices of grammatical cohesion; references and conjunction. The disappearance of the ellipsis and substitution item seemingly does not intrude on the cohesiveness of the text.

However, the analyzed passages do not expose all cohesion devices sufficiently and provide too many highlights on one type, that is reference. This fact showed that the sentences within the text should not be connected by the existence of all cohesion devices. Some of the adequate devices were as much as necessary to create a series of sentences called a text. Creating a readable text should not spread all the cohesion devices right away in one text. Some presence of them is already enough to create cohesive ties. The distribution of data analysis is presented below.

4.1 Reference

Reference concerns the relation between a discourse element and a preceding or following element. Reference deals with a semantic relationship whereas substitution and ellipsis deal with the relationship between grammatical units: words, sentence parts, and clauses in the case of reference, the meaning of a dummy word can be determined by what is imparted before or after the occurrences of the dummy word. The finding of this shows that there are several references found in students' writing. There are personal references, demonstrative references, and comparative references. As stated by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that one of grammatical cohesion is the reference. The type of references is personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference. A referent is the acquisition of special information obtained through the appointment process. Those types of references are presented in table 4. 31 below:

Table 1. References

Students	Type of References		
	Personal References	Demonstrative References	Comparative References
S1	22	6	5
S2	2	8	0
S3	1	8	1
S4	23	2	0
S5	14	2	0
S6	1	36	0
S7	11	18	0
S8	7	26	0
S9	19	5	0
S10	12	12	0
S11	13	11	3
S12	4	8	0

S13	7	4	0
S14	3	7	0
S15	15	1	0
Sub Total	**154**	**154**	**9**
Total References		**318**	

a. Personal Reference

Generally, grammatical cohesion devices that often appear in texts are references. The researcher found personal references in the text among others, personal pronoun examples *I, me, you, we, us, he, him, she, her, they*, and *it*, and the possessive pronoun *it's*, and possessive adjective *my, their, your, his, her* and *our*. Here, the examples of personal references:

> W 4: Apriliyah Asri is also *my* chairmate, *we* are always back home together, *she* has skin brown and good eyebrow

> W 5: *I* have very good a little brother, *his* name is Amhar fathur rahman. *He* is 14 years old.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that define personal reference as "reference by means of function in the speech situation, through the category of "person". There are three classes of personal reference: personal pronouns, possessive adjectives (possessive determiners), and possessive pronouns.

b. Demostrative Reference

The demonstrative reference elements that appear in the text are neutral demonstrative. The researcher found demonstrative references in the text among others; article *the*, the nominal demonstratives *this, that,* and the adverbial demonstrative *there, here,* and *now.* Here, the examples of conjunction references:
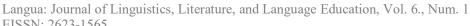
> W 3: *This* tool many used among *the* public for play social media.

> W 9: My name is Wa Ode Tiara Kaimudin, you can call me tiara I came from taliabu, but *now* I am in ternate because I am studying *here.*

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that demonstrative reference is achieved by means of location, on a scale of proximity. These demonstratives are also semantically subcategorized into selective demonstratives and non-selective demonstratives. The demonstrative reference elements that appear in the text are neutral demonstrative represented by the definite article *the*, the nominal demonstratives *this, these, that, those,* and the adverbial demonstrative *there, here, now,* and *then.*

c. Comparative Reference

The reference elements which occur in the text are comparative references. The researcher found comparative references in the text among others; *more*, and general comparison through identity *same*, and *different*. Here, the examples of conjunction references:

> W 11: When every chapter have *different* story, every chapter always make my mood *different* and always give me surprise.

After I red this novel, my mind ***more*** open and move my hearting for closer islam.
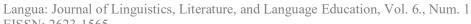
Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that comparative reference elements which occur in the text are particular comparisons through numerative *more*, *better, else, equal,* and general comparison through identity *same*, *different*, the adverbial *differently*, *identically*, and *slowly*.

4.2 Conjunction

The finding of this study shows that there are several conjunctions found in students' writing. There are additive conjunction, adversative conjunction, causal conjunction, and temporal conjunction. As stated by Halliday and Hasan (1976) that one of the grammatical cohesion is the conjunction. The type of conjunction is additive conjunction, adversative conjunction, causal conjunction, and temporal conjunction. Those types of additive conjunction, adversative conjunction, causal conjunction, and temporal conjunction are presented in table 4. 32 below:

Table 2. Conjunction

Students	Type of Conjunction			
	Additive Conjunction	**Adversative Conjunction**	**Causal Conjunction**	**Temporal Conjunction**
S1	5	2	0	0
S2	13	0	0	0
S3	6	0	1	0
S4	8	5	1	0
S5	8	0	0	0
S6	6	0	1	1
S7	11	1	1	0
S8	5	0	2	0
S9	3	1	4	2
S10	3	1	0	0
S11	4	1	2	1
S12	5	0	1	0
S13	1	0	0	0
S14	6	0	0	0
S15	5	0	0	0
Subtotal	**89**	**11**	**13**	**4**
Total conjunction	**117**			

a. Additive Conjunction

The conjunction elements which occur in the text are additive conjunction. The researcher found additive conjunction in the text among others; *and, also and beside*. Here, the examples of conjunction references:

W 12: ***Beside*** available facilities for children there is ***also*** has free wi-fi, seat, seller ***and*** shop so no wonder if many visitors came there especially in weekends.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that additive conjunction contributes to giving additional information without changing information in the previous clause or phrase. By the coordinating conjunction *and,* and other transitional expressions such as *also, moreover, beside,* and *in addition*, additive or addition conjunction is signaled in the text.

b. Adversative Conjunction

The conjunction elements which occur in the text are adversative conjunction. It was found that adversative conjunctions in the text among others; *but*. Here, the examples of conjunction references:

W 9: My name is Wa Ode Tiara Kaimudin, you can call me tiara I came from taliabu, ***but*** now I am in ternate because I am studying here.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that the adversative relation's basic meaning is contrary to expectation. The expectation comes from the content of what is being said. Adversative conjunction is marked in the text by the coordinating conjunction *but* and other conjunctions such as *however*, *instead*, *nevertheles*s, and *in contrast* that marks the difference or contrast between parts of a text.

c. Clausal Conjunction

The conjunction elements which occur in the text are clausal conjunction. The researcher found clausal conjunction in the text among others; *because*. Here, the examples of conjunction references:

W 12: They came bring their children ***because*** there available many facilities for children like waterslide, swing and others.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that causal conjunction marks the relationship between reason, result, and purpose. A causal relationship is marked by expressions such as *therefore*, *as a result*, *because*, *for this reason*, and *so*. *So* is an informal marker of causation. On the other hand, t*herefore* or *as a result* are used in more formal text.

d. Temporal Conjunction

The conjunction elements which occur in the text are temporal conjunction. The researcher found temporal conjunction in the text among others; *first*. Here, the examples of conjunction references:

W 11: I shy acknowledge but this novel is the ***first*** novel what make me cry.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) state that temporal conjunction specifies the time sequence relationship which exists between sentences. This temporal relation is expressed in its
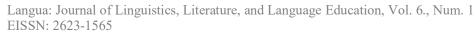
simplest form by *then*. Besides that, there are still many sequential senses like *after that*, *first*, *secondly*, *an hour later*, *finally*, *in conclusion*, *at last,* and other expressions.

5. Conclusion

The disappearance of the ellipsis and substitution item seemingly does not intrude on the cohesiveness of the text. However, the analyzed passages do not expose all cohesion devices sufficiently and provide too many highlights on one type, that is reference. This fact showed that the sentences within the text should not be connected by the existence of all cohesion devices. Some of the adequate devices were as much as necessary to create a series of sentences called a text. Creating a readable text should not spread all the cohesion devices right away in one text. Some presence of them is already enough to create cohesive ties. The unforgettable thing is the suitability of applying the devices in relating sentences that spread within the text. The students have the ability in building cohesion devices in writing descriptive text. The cohesiveness of the students' writing remains high and they have a good enough understanding of building cohesion grammatical although not all grammatical cohesion devices are used. Grammatical cohesion devices are an important element that should be included in the teaching of writing activities.

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