The Use of Cohesive Devices in Theses Abstracts Written by Undergraduate Students of English Department

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ABSTRACT (10 PT)

This study aims to find out the types of cohesive devices used by undergraduate students of English department in their theses’ abstracts and to find out the most and least dominant types of cohesive devices in their theses’ abstracts. The writer used corpus-based study as his research design. The data is taken from fifty randomly selected undergraduate theses’ abstracts written by English department students of IAIN Kediri. The technique of collecting data is documentation. This study exposes two main findings. First, the type of cohesive devices that are employed in undergraduate students’ theses’ abstracts, which are shown by reference (2051 items), conjunction (593 items), substitution (56 items), ellipsis (30 items), repetition (141 items), synonymy (40 items), antonymy (13 items). Second, the mostly used cohesive devices type by undergraduate students in their theses’ abstracts are reference with 2051 items (70.34%) occurrences and the least is antonymy with 13 items (0.44%) occurrences.

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1. INTRODUCTION (11 PT)

Cohesive devices are significant in written text because they are used to link each word or phrase to make easily-understood and coherent text (Halliday and Hassan, 1969). In other words, cohesive devices are needed to make good quality writing. Writing is considered one of the significant skills in English as Foreign Language (EFL). In writing, a writer needs time to think, write, edit, and rewrite, so it can be said that the process of writing is a long and complicated process (Creswell, 2014). Murray (2009) adds that writing is a process that entails rehearsing, drafting, and revising. Those processes include analyzing, comparing, and informing the ideas through structured writing (Amperawaty & Warsono, 2019).

Undergraduate thesis is academic writing on a specific topic written by an undergraduate student to get bachelor degree (Gee, 2005). It consists of some important parts of the thesis such as abstract, introduction, methods, findings and conclusion. Abstract is the most important part of the whole thesis (Eggins, 1994). The role of thesis abstract is to give a summary of the thesis to the reader (Thomason, 2012). Since the abstract plays an important role in the thesis, students should be able to write a well-written abstract.

However, writing, a well-written abstract is difficult because of three reasons. The first one, the students usually write the abstracts at the end of the thesis writing. Therefore, sometimes, the supervisor does not pay attention to the abstract written by the students. The second
one, an abstract is a concise summary from the whole thesis. Meanwhile, students need to summarize whole thesis that should be a written–abstract. However, they have limited space for it. Therefore, choosing the best sentences to put will be difficult. The last one, since the abstract is a summary of the whole thesis, it should cover all parts of the thesis and has limited sentences. Therefore, the students must write the abstracts as well as cohesion text, not just a collection of unrelated sentences. As Thomason (2013) said, a text is well cohesion if the whole text has the sentences that are semantically intertwined and consistent. In other words, students need to write a cohesive abstract to make readers easily understand the abstract. The use of cohesion may have contribution in preserving the sentence coherent. Halliday and Hassan (1976) states that cohesion is a set of possibilities in language to make a text has a unity. Cohesion will show how the text well-connected built up around the sentence, make a paragraph and ideally deliver the meaning well and make sense.

Based on those reasons, the researchers are interested to find out the types of cohesive devices found in undergraduate students of English department in their theses’ abstracts. Not only that, the researchers are going further by finding out the dominant and less dominant types of cohesive devices in undergraduate students of English department in their theses’ abstracts. Those abstracts are analyzed by using Halliday’s classification of grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion.

Grammatical cohesion is constructed by the grammatical structure in which its component ties each other. Halliday (1997) classifies grammatical cohesion into 4 major classes whose function is to tie and make up the text become unity and meaningful. Those are reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Lexical cohesion does not deal with grammatical and semantic connections but with connections based on the word used. The types of lexical cohesion can be distinguished as repetition, synonymy, and antonymy.

**Reference**

Reference functions to retrieve presupposed information in the text and must be identifiable for it to be considered as cohesive. In writing the text, reference indicates how the writer introduces the participants and keeps track of them throughout the text. Halliday has categorized reference into some areas. However, Halliday (1976) adds that for cohesion purposes, anaphoric reference is the most relevant as it provides a link with a preceding portion of the text. This research will mainly focus on endophoric reference.

Functionally speaking, there are three main types of cohesive references: personal, demonstrative, and comparative. Personal reference keeps track of function through the speech situation using nouns, pronouns like “he, him, she, her” and possessive determiners like “mine, yours, his, hers”. Demonstrative reference keeps track of information through location using proximity references like “this, these, that, those, here, there, then, and the”. Comparative reference keeps track of identity and similarity through indirect references using adjectives like “same, equal, similar, different, else, better, more” and adverbs like “so, such, similarly, otherwise, so, more”. (ibid: 37–39).

**Substitution**

Substitution is the replacement of one item by another. Halliday and Hassan (1976) say that substitution is a relation between linguistic items, such as words or linguistic systems. While according to Lesley Jeffries (2006) substitution is a device for avoiding repetition of the same words. It is commonly used where the speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of lexical items and is able to draw on one of grammatical resources of the language to replace the item. For example, “Would you like this cake? Or do you prefer the other one?” The word “one” substitutes “this cake”.

**Ellipsis**

Halliday (1976) says that ellipsis is a clause or a part of a clause or a part of a verbal or nominal group, may be presupposed at a subsequent place in the text by the device of positive omission by saying nothing where something is required to make up the sense. According to Raphael Salkie (1995:56) ellipsis is a device which in certain contexts, is possible to leave out a word or phrase rather than repeat it”. Ellipsis happens after a more specific mention of words is
omitted when the phrase needs to be repeated. The omitted element can be understood from the context. Ellipsis refers to a presupposed anaphoric item, although the reference is not through a place marker like in a substitution. The presupposed item is understood through its structural link. As it is a structural link, ellipsis operates through nominal, verbal, and clausal levels.

Conjunction
Halliday and Hassan (1976) conjunctive 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 text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in discourse. While according to Alice Macline (1994) conjunction is “some words and phrases are used to indicate a specific connection between different parts of a text”. Conjunction creates cohesion using conjunction words-whether temporal “after, before first, second, third”, causal “because”, and additive “further” or discourse makers “now, well, after all”. There are four types of conjunction. They are additive, adversative, causal and temporal that this will be discussed in following passage to each.

Repetition
Repetition is a form of lexical cohesion that involves the repetition of a lexical item, at one end of the scale; the use of the general word to refer back to a lexical item, at the other end of the scale; and a number of things in between the use of a synonymy, near-synonymy, or superordinate.

Synonymy
Synonymy deals with the relationship between words on the basis of the fact that these often occur in the same surrounding. Synonymy is part of lexical cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. Synonymy is a regular combination of words in which to fulfill the meaning, these words must occur together such as “black coffee” instead of “thick coffee” and “drink medicine” instead of “eat medicine”. Halliday and Hassan (1976) state that synonymy is the various lexical relations that include pairs of words drawn from the same series and part to whole also part to part.

Antonymy
Antonymy, according to Martin (1992), is words or phrases that are opposites with respect to some components of their meanings. To achieve cohesion in texts, writers tend to use the same words. Specifically, content words, such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and main verbs are used by writers to help a text to be coherent. For instance, the people also used the antonymy in order to tie their written text.

2. METHOD
This research is conducted by using a corpus-based study. In this research, cohesive devices were first theoretically explicated and afterwards they were analyzed based on the examples taken from reference and corpus created from legal documents of theses’ abstracts. This research pinpointed that cohesive devices ought to be carefully selected by legal writers and drafters in a bid to prevent ambiguity in legal texts (Arikunto, 1997). For this reason, the writer applied corpus-based study as the research design.
In collecting the data, the researchers chose the theses’ abstracts which were taken as the data source. Those abstracts were carefully read and marked in terms of the words which are included as cohesive devices. Next, the researchers checked whether the data were relevant or not. It was called relevant if the data were suitable for containing cohesive devices and taken from these abstracts.

The data, which had been converted into a document in Microsoft Word, were categorized into two, namely grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. After all the abstracts had been carefully analyzed and categorized, the results were presented and shown in table 1 and table 2.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Grammatical Cohesion
In this part, he researchers describe the result of grammatical cohesion used by undergraduates of English department in their theses’ abstracts. The results are shown in table 1.
Table 1: Grammatical Cohesion Used by Undergraduate Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Cohesive Device</th>
<th>Sub-Type of G Cohesion</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Cohesion</td>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>2051 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>56 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>30 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>593 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2730 Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Reference
The abstracts contain a total of 2051 references. This number is divided into three categories of reference: personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference.

   a. Personal reference
The researchers found 269 personal references being used in the abstracts. Personal reference in written text mostly identified as nouns, pronouns, and possessive determiners. Here is one example of the occurrence of personal reference:

   ...CTL is one of strategies to make students active in learning process and they can find material that connected with reality world so they can do in their life... (abs 1, 2015)

   The word “students” is a noun that act as an object of complement. Then, it is followed by a clause which is started by the word “they”. “They” appears as the reference that refers to the students. It means that the writer has awareness to keep the unity of the text using personal reference.

   b. Demonstrative reference
There are 1746 demonstrative references found in the English department student’s abstract. This reference type is considered as the most used by the students. It has the largest number because it has function to keep track of information through different locations by using proximity references. It also has the role of pre-modifier of the noun which is tied in the previous subject or object noun. Here an example that the researcher found in the sample.

   Teaching is the process of delivering the material to add the students' understanding of the project by using the media (as 1, 2016)

   The “the”, as commonly referred to definite article, is used to identify which noun/phrase it refers to. It must be semantically selective because in the written text, the references are mostly presupposing among the texts which create a cohesive textual environment. In the phrase of the material, the students’ understanding, the project, and the media, those phrases refer back to the process.

   c. Comparative Reference
The writer found 35 items of comparative reference in the theses’ abstracts. It keeps track of identity and similarity through indirect references using adjectives and adverbs. This one is an example that he found in the abstract.

   Hanifida method has better vocabulary mastery than those who are taught not using Hanifida Method (abs 16)

   In that example, the word “better” has meaning of comparison between the students who are taught using the method or not. It means that the students who are taught using Hanifida method will get a better result than those who are not taught using it.

2. Substitution
There are 56 substitutions written in the students’ theses abstracts. The researchers only found a nominal substitution in the theses abstracts. While the other two substitutions, verbal substitution and clausal substitution are not found.

   The total of nominal substitution is 56 items. Substitution has a function to link the semantic meaning within the texts. In Bloor (1995), substitution is used when a speaker or writer wishes to avoid the repetition of lexical item and is able to draw on one of the grammatical resources of the language to replace the item. Here are the most typical nominal substitutions that the researchers found in the theses’ abstracts.

   - Writing is one difficult problems in English skill (abs 15)
   - ... And when people are not aware about the difference of the other's, misunderstanding can happen... (abs 15)
In the first sentence, “one” is a word interpreted as one example of the many problems in learning English skills. The writer of that abstract chooses not to mention the problems that occurred in the writing but using the word one. The word “one” has become the replacement of the many problems that happened. In the second sentence. The word “people” had been replaced by “other’s” which means that the writer tried to reduce a similar word used by substitution.

3. Ellipsis

The occurrence of ellipsis was 30 items in the theses abstracts. The presupposed item is understood through its structural link. As it is a structural link, ellipsis operates through nominal, verbal, and clausal levels. However, the researchers only found clausal ellipsis that are used by students of English Department. The clausal ellipsis occurs when some of the words in the clause are omitted.

_Mastering vocabulary is very important for the students who learn English as a foreign language._ (abs. 14)

Two or more clauses that are directly related in a structure are said to form a clause complex. In a paratactic clause complex, the clauses have equal status. The word “who” is related to “student learn English” the relevant paratactic relation is coordination.

4. Conjunction

The number of conjunction found by researchers is 593 items. Conjunction is divided into 4 types, namely additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Each of those conjunction types is further analyzed in the following passages.

a. Additive

Additive conjunction acts to structurally coordinate or link by adding to the presupposed item and is signaled through and, also, too, furthermore, additionally. Additive conjunction may also act to negate the presupposed item and is signaled by nor, and, not, either, neither. One of the additive conjunction is shown below:

_In Indonesia, the implementation of the entire of curriculums is based on condition for that time. In addition, the condition of the government, so the curriculums have much change in the early period._ (abs. 17)

The word “in addition” is a conjunction that connects the sentence idea with the sentence. The connector has the function to link and keep track of meaning. It unites the text to keep meaningfully connected.

b. Adversative

Adversative conjunction acts to indicate contrary to expectation. They are signaled by yet, though, only, but, in fact, rather. In a sentence, the idea that is being expressed might contain a contradictory idea. Here, an example of the adversative conjunction is shown:

_The results show that, there are four types of compound words proposed by Maria Irene but are mostly used that is endocentric compound._ (abs. 15)

The word “but” is used to indicate that not all four types of compound words are used. Then it is added by an explanation that the most dominant or the most frequently used compound word by the people is endocentric compound.

c. Clausal

Causal conjunction expresses result, reason, and purpose. It is signaled by so, then, for, because, for this reason, as a result, in this respect, etc. Sentences should have the structure of point by point. It develops into the idea of paragraphs. The clausal conjunction has the function of a linker inside of the paragraph. This is one example of clausal conjunction found in the theses abstracts.

_In this study, the researcher gave pre-test and post-test. Then, the result of the test was calculated by using ANCOVA through SPSS 21.0. In the result of pre-test, the mean score of the experimental group is 60.20, and the control group is 63.47 (abs 14)_

The word “in the result” is the linker to the process of the research that has been done in the pre-test. This is used to show the connection between the result of pre-test and post-test.

d. Temporal

The last conjunction is temporal conjunction. It is signaling sequence or time. It is signaled by words: then, next, after that, next day, until then, at the same time, and at this point. This type of conjunction functions to give information to the reader when the moments or cases happened at one specific time. Here is an example of temporal conjunction taken from the theses abstracts.

_The findings indicate that the students are active during the implementation of think, pair, and share, speaking test improve... (abs 14)_
The time of students most active moments in learning that the sentence wants to show is when the teacher implements the think, pair, and share methodology. The word “during” does not give the specification of time, but it indicates the period of time of students’ most active behavior during classes.

**Lexical Cohesion**

The lexical cohesion of the English department students’ theses abstracts is discussed and shown in this part of the article. Table 2 contains the findings that is shown in a clearer and more detailed way.

**Table 2: Lexical Cohesion Used by Undergraduates Students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Cohesive Devices</th>
<th>Sub-Types of Cohesion</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Cohesion</td>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>141 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>40 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Antonymy</td>
<td>13 Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>194 Items</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Repetition**

Repetition is the use of same word. It pertains to lexical items that are likely to be found together within the same text. It occurs when a pair of words are not necessarily dependent upon the same semantic relationship, but they tend to occur within the same lexical environment. This is an example of repetition which is found in the theses abstracts.

*The vocabulary is very important part of learning English. Vocabulary is more than words. A person’s vocabulary certainly consists of a word and meanings. Words in your vocabulary are those you understand and use. (abs. 2015)*

The word “vocabulary” is used frequently in the sentences above. It appears in the first sentence and reappears in the second and third sentences. This reoccurrence of a word in some sentences is what repetition means. When a bilingual person wants to clarify their message, they tend to use both of the languages (codes) that they master to say the same message. Frequently, a message in one code is separated from the other code literally.

2. **Synonymy**

Synonymy is the reoccurrence of an item in a text, but the repeated item is not exactly the same as the referred item. In other words, synonymy is a certain word that can only occur with a certain word. This is an example of synonymy that the researchers found in the data.

*...is researcher herself the object of this study is the movie that contain teaching and learning process in Erin Gruwell’s class and her students. the primary data is the action appears in the movie, while the secondary data is any comments and textbooks related to the movie. in analyzing data, the writer uses the theory... (abs. 17)*

The words “researcher” and “writer” in that context have equal meaning and correlation. Repetition through synonymous lexical items is very dominant. However, the use of synonymy is unlikely to occur in their texts.

3. **Antonymy**

To achieve cohesion in texts, writers tend to use the same words. Specifically, content words, such as nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and main verbs are used by writers to help a text to be coherent. For instance, the people also used the antonym in order to tie their written text. Below is an example of antonymy found in students of English department theses abstracts.

*...the utterances of Nina Sayers as the female main character and Thomas Leroy as the male main character taken... (abs. 16)*

The words “male” and “female” have opposite meanings which can be considered antonym. The opposite meaning of male and female is used by the writer to show different characters in the novel. One character is male and the other one is female. This is needed so the reader can differentiate and have a clearer image of the context.

4. **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this research is to analyze the contributions of cohesive devices to the cohesiveness of students’ abstracts. The cohesive devices are analyzed by using Halliday and
Hasan’s theories. The result of the study revealed that there are only seven cohesive devices used by the students in their abstracts, which are reference, conjunction, repetition, substitution, synonymy, ellipsis, and antonymy. There is no elliptical cohesion or ellipsis found in students’ abstracts. Reference is the most frequently used in the 50 undergraduate students’ theses’ abstracts. It is continued by the occurrence of conjunction, repetition, and substitution. In terms of lexical cohesion, antonymy is the least dominant cohesion used by students in their theses’ abstracts. The reference is used to keep track of the participants that had been introduced earlier in the text. It is also used to point to something within or outside of the text, where the readers had the same shared knowledge. Additionally, conjunction contributes to the cohesiveness of students’ abstracts in connecting the preceding part of the abstract with the next part systematically. Meanwhile, substitution contributes to the process of substituting of one item by another. Then, the last device found, lexical cohesion contributes to the cohesiveness of students’ abstracts in the form of keeping the continuity of the text.

REFERENCES