Undergraduate Students' Cohesion in Writing the Final Semester Test of Writing Class at English Education Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan

Laila Safitri[1] and Hamzah[2]
[1]Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia, ✉ (e-mail), lailasyafitri262@gmail.com
[2]Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia, ✉ (e-mail), zzahham@gmail.com

Abstract

Students are expected to have an writing skill when they are at university which can be assumed as a new skill to learn since they were not introduced to such skill during their high school period. Based on preliminary observation, students still lack of the textual from which they struggle with the cohesiveness of certain text genre. In English Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan, the students have to write a discussion text as their final semester test. This research was designed as qualitative research. The subjects in this research were the sixth semester students of Writing II class at English Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan. The data were collected from students' discussion texts which will be written as the final semester test. The data were analyzed by using the theory introduced by Halliday and Hasan. Data were analyzed qualitatively. The procedure of qualitative research included: 1) data reduction, it was begun from the data collection until data analysis when the data have been obtained. Data were given codes; 2) data display, it included organizing and entering the data into the table in order to know what type and the total of cohesion used in writing discussion text. The analysis was concerned with: grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction), lexical cohesion (reiteration and collocation) were found in the students' writings. the researcher found 6 texts about dating, 2 texts about the advantages and disadvantages of internet and the other theme only 1 text in every theme. After being analyzed of the data, the researcher found 28.10 % occurred about reference in all the text, then 5.94% for substitusion, 61.62%, for conjunction. While, there is no the ellipsis, reiteration and collocation found in the discussion text of final semester test used by students. Thus, the dominant cohesion aspect occurred in these text was a conjunction. It was 61.62 % arround the text.

Keywords: cohesion, writing, final test

Introduction

Writing is an activity to convey something in written form by presenting our feelings and ideas. There are various definitions of writing proposed by several experts which can be cited as references in this research. Olshtain (2001:207) views writing as an act of communication suggests an interactive process which takes place between the writer and the reader via text. It emphasizes value on the purpose of writing and the target reader as well. It means when we use language to write, we are certainly creating a text. When we read, we are interpreting texts and when we talk and listen, we are also creating and interpreting texts.

Writing is an effective way to communicate and express your thoughts, feelings and opinions to others. Writing can be both fun and entertaining and there are a variety of ways to use writing in your everyday life. It means that writing is a way to put the writer idea which is visible and concrete what she/he sees, knows, feels, does, and it can be responsible.But this definition is not enough to defining the meaning of word writing.

The other definitions of writing are explained by Nunan (2003:88). He points out that writing as the process of thinking to invent ideas by thinking about how to express into a good writing, and arranging the ideas into a statement and paragraph clearly. It means that while the one writes, there are some activities to compose that thought into written form. Beside it, Wagner (2004:12) explains that writing is a process of selecting, combining, arranging, and developing ideas in a written form. It clearly states that writing is an active process to share the ideas in written form. Thus, every writer should arrange their ideas into words, clauses, phrases, and sentences in order that their writing can be read and the content understandable.

In line with Murray (2009: 3-4) identified writing as process which entails rehearing, drafting and revising. This process involves the exploration of thought, the composition of written draft, revision, and lastly the final draft. Some English foreign learners still find it difficult in composing a good writing, this case also happens to some students in every college. In higher education, writing is one of the learning requirements for the students to be successful in their study. Almost all of the assignments and also the tests demand them to write texts logically and systematically.

Writing is not only about how a writer pens the ideas, because there are certain rules to follow, for examples the rhetorical organization of the text based on the genres and also some cohesive devices which also related to the types of text. Those rules and genres will have the writers to smoothen the writing and deliver the ideas well. For instances in writing discussion text, a writer must know that the assay consists of three parts, they are: statement of issue, arguments and recommendation. After that, each paragraph needs suitable cohesive devices because they are very distinctive from one another.

The concept of cohesion cannot be separated from the concept of text, because cohesion is one of the major resources for text construction. Text is a piece of spoken or written language. A text is considered from the point of view of its structure and its function. Halliday and Hasan(1976) explain that the concept of cohesion is "a semantic one, it refers to relation of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text".they believed that cohesion has been recognized as important features of good writing. Cohesion is important both to the reader and writer to create and comprehend a text, so more attention should be paid to write generally and to the role of cohesive device particularly. Thus, students need to write cohesive text if they wish to prove to be qualified English writers, or may be for an academic writing or for their final test, whether they are English as Foreign Language or English as Second Language learners.

However, some studies have been done by some researcher in Asia. Tangkiengsirisin (2010) where conduct the study in Thammasat University in Thailand, the improvement of the students' use of cohesion could result from teacher written feedback, as well as in class instruction of cohesion provided by the teacher and extensive writing practice. It can be maintained that feedback on cohesion can help improve their written especially in the area of essay organization. It can be concluded that the teacher written feedback played an important role in the improvement of students' cohesion skill, and the revision process in response to the teacher feedback is a means of drawing students' attention to their writing and learn more about cohesion. Besides, Singchai and Jaturapitakkul (2016) on their a research 'Cohesion in Narrative Essay Writing of EFL Secondary Students in Bangkok, Thailand. This study examines what cohesive devices are used in students' Narrative essay which cohesive device is most frequently used in each type among three groups of students. 30 participants, all of whom are grade 11 students at a public school in Bangkok, where divided into three categories: advance, intermediate and beginner level. When comparing the use of cohesive devices among three categories, the advance students tool the largest proportion of personal reference. The beginner learners employed nominal substitution the most, however in small proportion. This study could provide useful suggestions for EFL writing classroom for not only students to improve the use of cohesion in their writings but also for teachers to prepare a practical writing pedagogy for the EFL students.

In relation to the EFL students in Thailand in case of cohesion, many studies also found in Arabic, such as a study conducted by Maison Alzankawi (2017) his study has shown the difficulty Kuwaiti undergraduate student of English face in their English writing and their attitude towards the writing process. The finding revealed that there was a notable difference in the students' use of cohesive devices in terms of frequency. Students over used certain types of cohesive device such as reference, conjunction, and lexical. While, neglecting to use substitution and ellipsis. This is certainly caused by lack of competence in their use of cohesive devices.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia also found some cases about cohesion or cohesive devices and also coherently of the text by several researchers, such Mawardi (2014) in his research about analysis of the cohesion and coherence of the students' narrative writings. This study found several writing problems that have affected the coherence of the students' narrative essays, namely the problem in using cohesive devices and grammar, included the problem with reference, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion, besides the problems with the structure of English essay occurred when some of the students did not develop their story writing into an essay, they only wrote only one paragraph or maybe two sentences in one paragraph. It makes some of essay wrote uncoherent.

Then, Suwandi (2016) in the summary of his research conducted in University of PGRI Semarang, the study shown that many of the students still find difficulties in writing coherently. Most of them seem to have insufficient knowledge on the use of cohesive devices or sentence adverbials that can relate ideas stated in the earlier sentences or reinforce the ideas. The result of this study shown that the abstracts analyzed haven't satisfactorily achieve coherence though some cohesive devices link reference, conjunction, ellipsis which are used to link one sentence to other. Some grammatical mistakes were also found such as the plural forms, active and passive voice.

In line with the case above, beside cohesion and coherence of the narrative writing and writing abstract, Emilia and Nurfitri (2018) also have done a research about cohesion of exposition text, this research aim to investigating the cohesion of exposition text written by eleventh grader of a school in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. The research analyzed 6 texts written by 6 students, representing low, mid and high achievers, categorized by the teacher. The result of this research shown that all thesis, argument, and restatement of the thesis. Thus, this research only focused on cohesion.

As elaborated, those studies were focused on cohesive devices in narrative writing, focused on cohesion of exposition text. A research on cohesive devices was also found in argumentative essay, and how students had in sufficient knowledge on cohesive devices in writing abstract. Meanwhile, the rest of them where about student's knowledge about cohesive devices. The first one was EFL learners created lexical cohesion between English and Turkish, the second one was how students gained cohesion knowledge from teacher's feedback. Actually**,** there are other types of essay which have certain cohesive devices and it is academically important to study about and to analyze the use of cohesive devices. Based on preliminary research, the students of English department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan have to write certain text for their final semester test, in the recent semester, they were assigned to write essay. Undergraduate students in IAIN Padangsidimpuan are expected to have the knowledge of how to write an acceptable academic paper such as a research report and a paragraph or an essay for final test. In other words, those who are now taking an English graduate program are considered to already have the ability to write a good text cohesively. Therefore, the researcher will analyze how students write cohesive discussion text and its rhetorical organization at English Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) there are five types of cohesion to attach the result of the interpretation of textual element to other element in the texts such as substitution, ellipsis, reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Then, Renkema (2004) also supports five types of cohesion, they are: substitution, ellipses, reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Thus, with cohesion, a writer is able to show how parts of a text, sentence or paragraph relate to one another. Halliday and Hasan classified and categorized the type of cohesion above into two major groups. They are grammatical and lexical cohesion.

The first is substitution. It is a relation between linguistic items, such a s words or phrases. Substitution is used to repeat the same word by using a semantically similar word in the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976:89) define that "substitution as connection of word or phrases which use repetition *one, ones* and *same*. They propose that substitution is the replacement of one item by another. It means that the writers avoid the repetition of a lexical item by replace it. There are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal and clausal substitution.

The second is ellipsis. The second is ellipsis. Quirk (1985) states that ellipsis is an abbreviation device for reducing redundancy and therefore it's major use to avoid repetition in the text. Ellipsis is the omission of a word or part of a sentence, which is closely related to the substitution. Then, Paul and Gone (1973) state that ellipsis is used to replace words omitted from the middle of quote sentence. It means that the word which omitted is replaced by the words that still have relation with the previous topic. So, ellipsis plays an important part in sentence connection. In can be concluded ellipsis is a deletion in the structure where something necessary is unmentioned in the structure. It could be called as "substitution by zero". Ellipsis divided into three types, they are nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis.

The third is the reference. Reference is a word which substitutes for other words or phrases. Halliday and Mattisen (2004) define reference means as the act of using language to refer to something in a text in order to get full meaning. Reference concerns the relation between a discourse element and a preceding or following element. It is the specific nature of the information that is signaled for retrieval. Similar with substitution and ellipsis, reference also categorized into three types, they are: personal, demonstrative and comparative reference. Halliday and Hasan (1976), Personal reference is type of reference that function in the speech situation through the category of person. Demonstrative reference is essentially a form of verbal of pointing. The last, comparative reference is indirect reference by means of identity or similarity.

The fourth is conjunction. Conjunction is a relationship which indicates how the following sentence or clause should be linked to the preceding or the following (part of the sentence). Halliday (1976) defines conjunction as "a clause or clause complex, or some longer stretch of text, (which) may be related to what follows it by one or other of a specific set of semantic relation". Then, Mather and Jaffe (2002) state that conjunction represent semantic relation that expresses how a clause or statement is relate in meaning to previous clause or statement; it is signal by a specific connecting word or phrase. It means that, it is usually achieved by the use of conjunctions (also known as connectives). Halliday and Hasan classify (1976: 238) categorized conjunction into four types, they are: adversative, additive, temporal and causal conjunction.

The fifth is lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion refers to a linguistic device which helps to create cohesiveness of the text. Renkema (1993) lexical cohesion does not deal with grammatical and semantic connections but with the connections based on the words used. In other word, lexical cohesion refers to

relation the words in a text. Lexical cohesion is achieved by the selection of vocabulary. Halliday and Hasan (1976) divide two types of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation. Reiteration is a type of lexical cohesion that establishes the semantic links by means of using repetition, synonym, super-ordinate, and general world. It is a mechanism of producing cohesion in a text by means of repetition of two or more lexical items that are observable at the surface of the text.

Meanwhile, collocation deals with the relationship between words and the basis of the fact that these often occur in the same surrounding. It is lexical cohesion which depends upon their tendency to co-occur in texts. It pertains to lexical items that are likely to be find together within the same lexical environment.

Academic writing has gained main spot light for long time, especially in universities, because it is used in every major for varied functions, such writing essay, article, and research report. However, students are not really familiar with such writing, especially in Indonesia, because based on the curriculum; they are only introduced to several text genres such as narrative, descriptive, recount, and procedure text. It is due to the level of English as a foreign language in Indonesia, thus the students have to start from the basic English writing skills. Meanwhile, when they go to universities, they are expected to write academic textlike mentioned before. In other words, when the students are at undergraduate level, they are expected to have the knowledge of how to write an acceptable academic writing such as a research report and a paragraph or an essay both for their assignment and final semester test.

Based on preliminary research, the students of English department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan have to write certain text for their final semester test, in the recent semester, they were assigned to write a discussion text. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994: 214), discussion text has social function to present at least two points of view about an issue. The generic structure of discussion text such as the issue, arguments for and against of statements of differing point of view and the last is the conclusion or recommendations. Where, in the first point, the writer states that the issue by giving the statement and preview about two points of view the issue. After that, the writer gives any point or arguments and elaborated them. The last, the writer concludes or recommends the arguments have been discussed.

In line with that problem, undergraduate students are expected to have the knowledge of how to write an acceptable academic paper such as a research report and a paragraph or an essay for final test. In other words, those who are now taking an English graduate program are considered to already have the ability to write a good text. Based on the phenomena illustrated above, the researcher is interested in investigating and analyzing the cohesion of discussion text at English Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

Method

The type of this research were qualitative research, since it sight deep discussion about the cohesion used in writing discussion text of final semester test. The focus of qualitative research is to provide the understanding of a social setting or activity from the perspective of the research participants. This qualitative research designs involving analysis of cohesion in discussion text. The subjects in this research were the sixth semester students of Writing II class at English Department of IAIN Padangsidimpuan.

Document analysis was used as the data that was 20 items text of the result final test with different themes. The data will be collected from students' discussion texts which will be written as the final semester test. The data were analyzed by using the theory introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The analysis was concerned with: grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction), lexical cohesion (reiteration and collocation) were found in the students' writings. In analyzing the data, this research was analyzed qualitatively offered by Miles and Huberman (1984). The procedures of qualitative research included: 1) data reduction, it was begun from the data collection until data analysis when the data have been obtained. In this activity, the intended data was given codes; 2) data display, it included organizing and entering the data into the table contains of column in order to know the theme, type and total of cohesion used to describe the data.

After collecting the data, the next step is analyzing the data. In analyzing the data, the researcher will be implemented the steps offered by Gay and Airasian (2009: 456) they are data managing, reading/ memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting.

a. Data managing

The researcher manages the data collected during the observation. All the data were from the documents. The researcher organizes the data and checks for completeness from the data providing students writing test product.

b. Reading/ memoing

The researcher have to read carefully (read the students' writing). Then, she/he makes code or mark the cohesion and rhetorical organization itself.

c. Description

In this steps, the researcher explain he data in dept to provide detail description. The researcher describes all the data that she/he got from the participants during the research.

d. Classification

The next steps, the researcher classified the data, after classifying the data; the researcher selects the correlated to the research purpose and organize them into smaller units before interpreting them.

e. Interpretation

The last steps, the researcher focus on investigating all the cohesions and rhetorical organization found of students' discussion text. Interpretation led researcher to summarize and conclude the data. In this step, the researcher interprets the data by giving scores to the students' discussion text. In giving the scores, the test will administer once time, the researcher will be helped by the writing Ⅱ lecture of IAIN Padangsidimpuan. Then, the scores will be categorized as high/excellent, good, high average, low average, weak, low/very weak (Hamp-Lyons: 1992) and the students' skill of each category will be described. After that, to see the percentage of the students' skill in using cohesion, the researcher will use the formula proposed by Sudjana (1991), as follows:

P = f/N x 100%

P = percentage   f = frequency   N = number of students

Results and Discussion

In this section, the researcher continued to analyze the data.The data obtained from the result of the students' final semester test of writing II class, which consisted of 20 text with different theme. The use of cohesion in students' discussion text in final writing test was marked by the usage of cohesion, it was analyzed based on the theory introduced by Halliday and Hasan (1976), the analysis was concerned with: grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction), lexical cohesion (reiteration and collocation) were found in the students' writings. The following table illustrates below:

Table 1. The cohesion used by the 20 students in result of writing the final semester

No. of text	Types of cohesion used						Total
	Grammatical Cohesion				Lexical Cohesion		
	Reference	Substitution	Ellipsis	Conjunction	Reiteration	Collocation	
T 1	3	-	-	9	-	-	12
T 2	4	-	-	4	-	-	6
T 3	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
T 4	3	-	-	9	-	-	12
T 5	1	1	-	7	-	-	9
T 6	4	-	-	8	-	-	12
T 7	4	1	-	8	-	-	13
T 8	2	-	-	5	-	-	7
T 9	3	-	-	8	-	-	11
T 10	3	-	-	6	-	-	9
T 11	1	-	-	4	-	-	5
T 12	1	1	-	5	-	-	7
T 13	4	-	-	4	-	-	8
T 14	-	1	-	3	-	-	4
T 15	3	1	-	7	-	-	11
T 16	3	2	-	4	-	-	9
T 17	2	1	-	3	-	-	6
T 18	-	-	-	6	-	-	6
T 19	4	1	-	8	-	-	13
T 20	5	1	-	5	-	-	11
Total	52	11	-	114	-	-	185

Percentage: 28,10%   5,94%   0%   61,62%   0%   0%   100%

As it is shown in the table above, the kinds of cohesion realizer in the discussion text are reference, substitution, and conjunction. While there is no the ellipsip, reiteration and also collocation in the text. To

know what kind of cohesion perform mostly used in discussion text, the researcher counted the kind of cohesion into persentages. In this analysis, the researcher used a simple formula:

$$X = \frac{N}{\sum N} X 100\%$$

Where:

X: the persentage of grammatical and lexical cohesion used in discussion text found in final semester test.

N : the number of each type of grammatical and lexical cohesion used in discussion text found in final semester test.

∑N: the total number of grammatical and lexical cohesion used in discussion text found in final semester test.

In the final semester test, there are 14 themes about discussion text, they are ;

1. Dating
2. Disadvantges and disadvantages of falling in love
3. Junk food
4. Internet for teenager
5. The advantages and disadvantages of internet
6. Dating in daily life
7. Games for children
8. Students dating
9. Tor simarsayang
10. Do teenagers nedd mobile phone?
11. Internet or social media influence on youth
12. Tiktok
13. Social media
14. Gadget for children

From the themes above , the researcher found 6 texts about dating, 2 texts about the advantages and disadvantages of internet and the other theme only 1 text in every theme. After being analyzed of the data, the researcher found 28.10 % occurred about reference in all the text, then 5.94% for substitusion, 61.62%, for conjunction. While, there is no the ellipsis, reiteration and collocation found in the discussion text of final semester test used by students. Thus, the dominant cohesion aspect occurred in these text was a conjunction. It was 61.62 % arround the text.

On the other hand, Sukriyah, Sumarlam, & Djatmika (2018) in his research on published narrative texts reported that grammatical cohesion of personal pronouns in children's stories, adolescent stories, and adult stories published in *Kompas*. They found that cernak, roman, and cerpen rubric of Kompas newspaper is a discourse coherent because it is supported by a slick lexical cohesion marker. However, this study is not focused on students' ability.

Conclusions

This research has presented the results of cohesion in final semester text in writing II class, especially in discussion text used by students English Department in IAIN Padangsidimpuan. The research analyzed 14 theme texts witten by 20 students. Based on students' discussion text, the types of cohesion used are grammatical cohesion (reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction), lexical cohesion (reiteration and collocation). Ellipsis, reiteration and collocation are not found in students' discussion text. The most type of cohesion used was conjunction. The next is reference, then substitution. The students writing shown monotonous use of cohesion, it wasn't used variously. The finding shows that the students do not have knowledge about cohesion.

Acknowledgment

References

Ahmed, A. H. 2010. *Students' Problems with Cohesion and Coherence in EFL Essay Writing in Egypt: Different Perspectives*. Literacy Information and Computer Educational Journal Vol. 1,Issue 4. December 2010.

Alarcon, B., & Morales. 2011. *Grammatical Cohesion in Students' Argumentative Essay.* Journal of English and Literature, Vol 2, pp. 114-127.

Alzankawi, M. 2017. Kuwaiti Undergraduate Problems with Cohesion in EFL Writing. International Journal of Education, Learning and Development, Vol. 5, No. 4. Pp.55-65.

Anderson, M., & Anderson, Kathy. 1998. *Text Type in English.* Third Edition. Melbourne: MacMillan Education Australia PTY LTD.

Bailey, M. Helen. 2014. *Academic Journal, Clause Relations and Macro pattern: Cohesion, Coherence and the writing of Advanced ESOL Students.* Retrieved on January 4, 2019

Bailey, S. 2003. *Academic Writing: A Practical Guide for Students*. New York: Routledge Falmer.

Halliday, M. A. K & Hasan, Ruqaiya. 1976. *Cohesion in English*. London and New York : Longman.

Halliday, M.A. K & C. Matthiessen. 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold Publisher.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. 1984. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Sage Publication, Baverly Hills. London.

Murray, R. & Moore, S. 2006. *The Handbook of Academic Writing*. New York: Routledge.

Murcia, Marianne Celce & Elite Olshtain. 2000. *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Renkema, Jan. 2004. *Introduction to Discourse Studies. Amsterdam:* John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Singchai, P., & Jaturapitakkul, N. 2016. Cohesion in Narrative Essay Writing of EFL Secondary Studens in Thailand. The New English Teacher, Vol. 10. No. 2, pp 89-111

Sukriyah, S., Sumarlam, & Djatmika (2018) Grammatical cohesion of personal pronouns in children's stories, adolescent stories, and adult stories of *Kompas. Lingua Didaktika: Jurnal Bahasa dan Pembelajaran Bahasa,* 12(1), 59-75.

Suwandi. 2016. *Coherence and Cohesion: An Analysis of the Final Project Abstracts of Undergraduate Students of PGRI Semarang.* Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Vol. 5, No. 2.

Tangkiengsirisin, S. 2010. *Promoting Cohesion in EFL Expository Writing: A Study of Graduate Students in Thailand.* International Journal of Arts and Sciences, Vol. 3, No. 16

Wagner, Edith. 2004. *Express Yourself: Writing Skill for High School*. New York: Learning Express.