

## **THE COHESIVE DEVICES OF STUDENTS' WRITING RECOUNT TEXT**

**\*Maulidina Bunga Halimatusyahdiah**

**\*\*Prof. Dr. Siti Aisah Ginting, M.Pd.**

### **ABSTRACT**

The aims of the study were to discover the kinds of cohesive devices that were used in students' writing recount text, to investigate the contribution of cohesive devices in students' recount text, and to find out the reasons why students used cohesive devices. The study used the frameworks of Halliday&Hasan (1976) and Eggins (2004). The study used descriptive qualitative research. The data was analyzed based on Miles, Huberman, and Saldana's (2014) framework. The results of the findings revealed that students in Grade X at SMA Negeri 15 Medan used four cohesive devices, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction. There was 58,97% contribution of lexical cohesion, which was indicated through the use of vocabulary of nouns and verbs, followed by reference that had 30,69% contribution. It was derived from category of person as well as the scale of proximity. Conjunction, on the other hand, had the percentage as much as 10,34% which was obtained through extension and enhancement type. Furthermore, the findings of the study found 8 out of 12 reasons why students used cohesive devices.

**Keywords:** *Cohesive Devices, Students' Writing, Recount Text*

---

\*Graduate Status

\*\*Lecturer Status

## **INTRODUCTION**

In daily life, humans use language to communicate and interact with others. It is also used to convey people's opinions, personalities, knowledge, imagination or to express happiness, sadness, frustration, sickness themselves in the spoken and written form. A language is a series of sounds, signals, words used by people from various countries or nations which aims to interpret people's desires or thoughts in oral or written form. It means that language is a human's identity regardless of where they are, whether in a family, society or school.

Language is required for students in academic school, particularly in language teaching that aims to make students participate in some social group or be a part of a cluster. They can share and convey ideas, explore and get information from the teacher or their peers. The teacher must teach four essential language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order for students to participate in the classroom effectively.

Writing is the process of forming words, sentences, paragraphs, or composing and developing ideas, events, news of the students in written form. There are some genres used by the teacher in the teaching and learning process when composing a text. Recount text is one of some genres which someone shares a past experience, story or phenomenon with readers or listeners chronologically. Furthermore, there are several aspects that must be considered in order to create a good piece of writing, such as cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are equipment to bind one element to another as the result they can create a flow of information

and meaningful text. Halliday & Hasan (1976) stated that there are four types of cohesive devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. The specific nature of the information signaled for retrieval is referred to as a reference. Substitution is a grammatical cohesion, a word to word relationship rather than a semantic relationship. The technique of deleting superfluous items that have been mentioned before in a text and replacing them with nothing is known as ellipsis. Conjunction expresses specific meanings that are predicated on the presence of other components in the discourse.

Based on the researcher's observation and interview of students in Grade X about their writing, the researcher found that students lacked the ability to use cohesive devices in writing. This was an example of students' writing randomly "My mother, my sister and I" as the pronoun in the text and those belonged to "reference" in the grammatical cohesion. In the third sentence, the pronoun properly "My mother, my sister and I" substituted into "We". It could be said that the students did not use the cohesive devices correctly. That is why cohesive devices are very crucial in writing because they act as a bridge to link parts of the text. Moreover, it can help students' writing hold together, so the readers can easily understand the content or follow the writers' idea well.

Thus, to ascertain the use of cohesive devices which occurs in students' writing was needed. The researcher conducted a study to find out the cohesive devices that were used in students' writing, to discover how cohesive devices contributed in students' recount text, and to acknowledge the reasons why students used cohesive devices.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **1. Cohesion**

#### **a. Definition of Cohesion**

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), “cohesion is semantic one, it refers to the relation of meaning that exists within the text and that defines it as a text. Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one presupposes the other, in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded by excerpt recourse to it. When this happens, a relation of cohesion is set up, and the two elements, the presupposing and presupposed, are thereby at least potentially integrated into a text” (p.4).

Cohesion has two branches, namely grammar and vocabulary. So, it is categorized as grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is divided into four types of reference, ellipsis, substitution and conjunction while lexical cohesion is divided into two types, namely reiteration and collocation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 5-6).

#### **b. Kinds of Cohesive Devices**

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), there are four kinds of cohesive devices in the grammatical cohesion those are reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction.

##### **1) Reference.**

Halliday & Hasan (1976, p.31) stated that the specific nature of the information signaled for retrieval is referred to as a reference. The

referential meaning, or identity, of the specific thing or class of things that is being referred to is the information to be recovered in the case of reference, and the cohesion is found in the continuity of reference, when the same thing enters the discourse for the second time.

## 2) Substitution

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976, p. 90), substitution is a grammatical cohesion, a word to word relationship rather than a semantic relationship, the various varieties of substitution are characterized grammatically rather than semantically.

## 3) Ellipsis

Halliday & Hasan (1976) stated, “Ellipsis can be a familiar notion that is ‘something left unsaid’. There is no implication here that what is unsaid is not understood; on the contrary, ‘unsaid’ implies ‘but understood nevertheless’, and another way of referring to ellipsis is in fact as something understood, where understood is used in the special sense of ‘going without saying’. It is defined that ellipsis as substitution by zero; it would equally well have defined substitution as explicit ellipsis” (p.142).

## 4) Conjunction

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976), “Conjunctive elements are cohesive not in themselves but indirectly, but virtue of their specific

meanings; they are not primarily devices for reaching out into preceding (or following) text, but they express certain meanings which presuppose the presence of other components in the discourse” (p.226).

### **c. The Function of Cohesive Devices**

According to Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Renkema (1993) as stated in Jambak (2014), the functions of cohesion are:

- 1) to signify the use of reference pronouns (e.g. I,my,your,you,she) substitution (e.g. one,ones,same,do,does,doing,so) and ellipsis.
- 2) to indicate an addition of factor or concept (e.g. in addition,furthermore,etc).
- 3) to denote a time order (e.g. meanwhile,soon,after,etc).
- 4) to indicate a spatial order (e.g. this,there,here,etc).
- 5) to convey a point of view in a discussion (e.g. then,next,etc).
- 6) to demonstrate the degree or order of importance of a class (e.g. better,the most,etc).
- 7) to demonstrate the existence of a cause and effect relationship (e.g. consequently,because,therefore,etc).
- 8) to demonstrate comparison (e.g. equal,similarly,etc).
- 9) to indicate classification/exemplification (e.g. for example,for instance,etc).
- 10) to demonstrate contrast (e.g. nevertheless, however,etc).
- 11) to denote the end of a sentence or a summary (e.g. in conclusion,in brief,to sum up, etc).

12) to indicate repetition, hyponym, synonym, antonym, meronym, as well as general item.

## **2. Concept of Writing**

### **a. Nature of Writing**

Writing is an ability that involves the use of human senses to create a written product. According to Weigle (2002: 19), the nature of writing can be seen from several perspectives. First, in comparison with the other so-called productive skill of speaking. Speech and written discourse share many linguistic resources and can be used to achieve similar communicative goals in many cases. Writing, on the other hand, differ from speech in a number of significant ways, both in terms of textual qualities and the factors that govern how each modality is used. Written language is not simply spoken language on paper; it is a distinct mode of communication that involves very different socio cultural norms and cognitive processes, among other things.

Second, writing as a social and cultural phenomenon. Acts of writing, in this sense, cannot be viewed in isolation but must be viewed in their social and cultural context. The implication for writing ability testing is that writing ability cannot be separated from the situations in which it occurs. Ability to write implies the ability to function as a literate member of a specific sector of society or discourse community, or to use language to demonstrate one's membership in that community, to some level (Weigle: 2002, p. 22).

Next, writing as a cognitive activity. There are two cognitive processes proposed by Weigle (2002: 24) namely Hayes' model (1996) and Bereiter &

Scardamalia (1987). Text interpretation, reflection, and text production are all cognitive processes in the Hayes' model (1996 as cited in Weigle: 2002, p.25). These three processes are involved not only in drafting but also in revising one's writing. Moreover, Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987 as cited in Weigle: 2002, p. 35) define that two model processes provide an explanation for the distinction between skilled and unskilled authors: skilled writers employ significantly different, not just more refined, writing techniques than unskilled writers. It also explains why writing projects vary in difficulty, even for skilled writers: if a task requires a high level of information and the writer is unfamiliar with a certain genre, the task will require greater cognitive effort to overcome challenges in both the content and rhetorical problem spaces.

The last perspective is the relationship between writing and second language proficiency (Weigle, 2002: 35). Second language writers use many of the same writing processes in their second language as they do in their first, and expertise in writing can transfer from the first to the second language, given at least a certitude in the first language.

#### **b. The Purposes of Writing**

Based on Coffin et al (2003: 20), there are several purposes of writing:

- 1) as a form of assessment,
- 2) as a tool for critical thinking, comprehension and memory,
- 3) to expand students' learning beyond lectures and other formal meetings,
- 4) to strengthen the communication skills of students, and

5) to prepare students about certain disciplines to be professionals in the future.

### **3. Recount Text**

#### **a. Definition of Recount Text**

Dirgeyasa (2014: 24) stated that a recount is retelling or recounting of a past experience or event. In literary terms, experience refers to what we feel, do, hear, and even what we dream about. In terms of written text, the events of the past are designed and packaged as a recount text, which is distinct from the narrative genre in which they appear. A narrative is usually fictitious, whereas a recount is about something real or true that happened in the past. Then, it is mentioned that recount writing should include orientation, setting the scene, a chronological sequence of the events, and (optionally) a final personal comment or reflection.

#### **b. The Generic Structure and Textual Elements**

Boardman (2008: 287 as cited in Saragih et al., 2014, p. 57) elaborated the steps for generating a written recount text are as follows:

- 1) The first paragraph provides background information regarding who, what, where, and when. It is referred to as orientation.
- 2) A list of events, usually in chronological sequence, named “event 1”, “event 2”, “event 3”.
- 3) The term of evaluation refers to a personal opinion and/or evaluative remarks that are placed throughout the chronological record of occurrences.

- 4) An orientation that “completes” the sequences of events or explains what happened at the end.

### **c. Linguistic Features**

Boardman (2008: 287 as cited in Saragih et al., 2014: 57) explains the language features usually found in a recount:

- 1) use of nouns and pronouns to identify people, animals or things involved.
- 2) use of past action verbs to refer the events.
- 3) use of past tense to located events in relation to speaker’s or researcher’s time.
- 4) use conjunctions and time connectives to sequence the event.
- 5) use of adverb and adverbial phrases to indicate the event.
- 6) use of adjective to describe nouns.

## **4. Contribution of Cohesive Devices**

According to Nicholson et al (2018: 206), “Contribution is a fluid term, its semantic implications often casting a shadow over doctoral examinations or decisions of whether or whether not, to accept a paper for publication. But, as a research student, publishing academic or reviewer, clear guidance as to what amounts to a contribution is, at best, fragmented and no board and comprehensive review and analysis seems to have been performed on this topic in any discipline”. Ladik and Stewart (2008: 157 as cited in Nicholson et al, 2019: 206) state that despite the frequency of the question – what is a contribution? – being posed, “it has seldom been directly addressed in print”. We adopt a position in this paper

that a contribution strategy is a deliberate form of rhetorical approach used by authors to communicate the distinctive value of their written works to an audience.

Cohesion is one of the significant features needed in writing. Eggins (2004: 33) stated that cohesion has three main types in written language, namely reference, lexical cohesion and conjunction. The first type is reference. According to Eggins (2004: 33), “Reference refers to how the writer or speaker introduces participants and then keeps track of them once they are in the text. Participants are the people, places, and things and that get talked in the text. Whenever a participant mentioned in a text, the writer or speaker must signal to readers or listeners whether the identity of the participants already known or not. That is, participants in a text may be either presented to us (introduces as ‘now’ to the text) or presumed (encoded in such a way that we need to retrieve their identity from elsewhere)”.

The second type is lexical cohesion. Eggins (2004: 42) states that lexical cohesion refers to how the writer or speaker uses lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) event sequences (chains of clauses and sentences) to relate the text consistently to its area of focus or its field. Lexical cohesion analysis derives from observing that there are certain expectancy relations between words. Lexical relations analysis is a way of semantically describing how words in a text relate to each other, how they cluster to build up lexical strings. The third type is conjunction. Eggins (2004: 47) describes that conjunction refers to how the writer creates and expresses logical relationships between the parts of a text. Conjunctive cohesion adds to the texture of text, helping to create that semantic unity that

elaboration, extension, and enhancement. These allow us to create semantically meaningful structural links between clauses as we chain clauses together to form clause complexes.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used descriptive qualitative research. According to Creswell (2009), descriptive qualitative research is an umbrella term used to refer to the theoretical perspectives designs as narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, action research, case study, and content analysis. The data were students' writing recount text and the transcription of students' interview. The sources of data were students in Grade X at SMA Negeri 15 Medan. The researcher used two techniques in collecting data, those are document analysis and interview.

The researcher used Miles, Huberman & Saldana's theory (2014: 31 & 32) to analyze the problems of the study. There are three categories of data analysis, namely data condensation, data display, drawing and verifying conclusions.

1. Data condensation

In the first step, the researcher collected students' writing and transcription of students' interview.

2. Data display

In the second step, the researcher analyzed each data in order to get the results of findings.

3. Drawing and Verifying Conclusions

In the last step of data analysis, the researcher concluded the results that have been derived from data display.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Research Findings**

In accordance with data and data analysis, the results of findings were concluded as follows:

1. Based on analysis, it was found that the students used four types of cohesive devices in their writing, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction.
2. Based on analysis, cohesive devices had great contribution of students' text. The contribution of describing how words in a text relate to each other was represented through the use of language vocabulary, particularly nouns and verbs from students' text. It obtained 58,97% of lexical cohesion. In addition, the identifying of participants and keeping track of them in the text contributed as much as 30,69% of reference, which was enriched through the category of person as well as the scale of proximity. The last, the contribution of creating and expressing logical relationships between parts of a text was represented through the use of extension and enhancement type. It got 10,34% of conjunction.
3. The reason why students used cohesive devices because they wanted to signify the use of reference pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, to indicate an

addition of factor or concept, to denote a time order, to indicate a spatial order, to convey a point of view in a discussion, to demonstrate the existence of a cause and effect relationship, to demonstrate comparison, and to demonstrate contrast.

## **Discussions**

The study in this chapter pointed out that there were four kinds of cohesive devices used in students' writing recount text, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. This finding indicated compatibility with Halliday & Hasan's (1976) framework. The researcher also found that substitution had a lower number than others. It could be seen that there was one student who applied this kind in the sentence. The reason was because most students were unfamiliar to use this type in their writing. Otherwise, there were reference, conjunction and ellipsis frequently used by students. They used reference to inform the participants that were involved or to refer back to the previous participants in the text. They used conjunction to relate the sentence, to demonstrate the relationship of cause and effect, and to provide a series of time orders in the text. Meanwhile, they used ellipsis to prevent the repetition in the sentence.

The result of the study has differences with Chanyoo's study (2018). The study used Halliday & Hasan's framework (1976) revised by Thompson (1996) which consisted of ellipsis, reference, collocation, reiteration and conjunction. The researcher revealed that Thai Undergraduate students majoring in English used four types of cohesive devices namely reiteration, reference, conjunction and ellipsis. The students most frequently used reiteration, reference, and conjunction

in their writing due to reiteration is reflected as an interclausal semantic device which is used to link different parts of the same idea or repeat the meaning of the previously mentioned items. Meanwhile, reference and conjunction are considered as the interclausal syntactically because they are used to refer to the previously mentioned idea in a clausal or sentential level. Another reasons Thai Undergraduate students most frequently used reference and conjunction in their writing were they had limited number of lexical items and linguistic devices in their repertoire as a result they struggled to expand their text and produce a coherence in writing.

Based on the result of second finding, cohesive devices had great contribution of students' text. The contribution of describing how words in a text relate to each other was represented through the use of language vocabulary, particularly nouns and verbs from students' text. It obtained 58,97% of lexical cohesion. In addition, the identifying of participants and keeping track of them in the text contributed as much as 30,69% of reference, which was enriched through the category of person as well as the scale of proximity. The last, the contribution of creating and expressing logical relationships between parts of a text was represented through the use of extension and enhancement type. It got 10,34% of conjunction.

This finding was contradicted by Palupi & Aziza (2019). The study is based on cohesion by Halliday & Hasan. There are 10 abstracts that can be analyzed in the journal, all reference and reiteration types were found by the

researcher. The number of all types are 318 consist of reference is 254 and reiteration is 54.

There were eight reasons why students used cohesive devices, namely they wanted to signify the use of reference pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, to indicate an addition of factor or concept, to denote a time order, to indicate a spatial order, to convey a point of view in a discussion, to demonstrate the existence of a cause and effect relationship, to demonstrate comparison, and to demonstrate contrast.

The result of this finding was contradicted by Halliday & Hasan (1976) and Renkema (1993), as cited in Jambak (2014). According to them, there are 12 functions of cohesion. Those are to signify the use of reference pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, to indicate an addition of factor or concept, to denote a time order, to indicate a spatial order, to convey a point of view in a discussion, to demonstrate the degree or order of importance of a class, to demonstrate the existence of a cause and effect relationship, to demonstrate comparison, to indicate classification or exemplification, to demonstrate contrast, to denote the end of a sentence or a summary, to indicate repetition, hyponym, synonym, antonym, meronym, as well as general item.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **Conclusions**

The conclusions are divided into three points, which will be explained as follows:

1. It was found that the students used four types of cohesive devices in their writing, namely reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction.

2. Cohesive devices had great contribution of students' text. The contribution of describing how words in a text relate to each other was represented through the use of language vocabulary, particularly nouns and verbs from students' text. It obtained 58,97% of lexical cohesion. In addition, the identifying of the participants and keeping track of them in the text contributed as much as 30,69% of reference, which was enriched through the category of person as well as the scale of proximity. The last, the contribution of creating and expressing logical relationships between parts of a text was represented through the use of extension and enhancement type. It got 10,34% of conjunction.
3. The students used cohesive devices because they wanted to signify the use of reference pronouns, substitution, ellipsis, to indicate an addition of factor or concept, to denote a time order, to indicate a spatial order, to convey a point of view in a discussion, to demonstrate the existence of cause and effect relationship, to demonstrate comparison, and to demonstrate contrast.

### **Suggestions**

1. Students

Students should learn to understand and apply cohesive devices well in four language skills, particularly writing skill. They also should think about other elements of scoring, such as making an outline before writing, pay attention to punctuation, spelling, and language features during writing a text so that they can follow the steps of writing correctly, create

the best quality of writing, and get an excellent score in four language skills, especially writing skill.

## 2. English Teachers

Teaching language skills, especially writing skill is an arduous task where the English teachers train and facilitate students during the teaching and learning process. It is all done in order to make students able to arrange sentences and extend them into paragraphs to create a semantic and logical text. Therefore, the researcher hopes that English teachers do not easily give up on giving the best things for students, such as doing various methods of teaching English lessons and giving motivation to students if their writing is still far from their hope.

## REFERENCES

- Chanyoo, N. (2018). Cohesive Devices and Academic Writing Quality of Thai Undergraduate Students. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 9 (5), 994-1001.
- Coffin, C., Mary, J.C., Sharon, G., Ann, H., Theresa, M. L., & Joan, S. (2003). *Teaching Academic Writing: A Toolkit for Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Dirgeyasa, I Wy. (2014). *College Academic Writing: A Genre Based Perspective (1<sup>st</sup> Edition)*. Medan: Unimed Press.
- Eggins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. London: Continuum.
- Halliday, M.K., & R. Hasan. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Jambak, V. T. (2014). An Analysis of Cohesive Devices in Used in The Headline News of The Jakarta Pos. *Linguistica. Journal of Linguistics of FBS UNIMED*, 3 (1), 58-70.

- Miles, M.B., A. Michael Huberman., & J. Saldana. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook (Edition 3)*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.
- Nicholson, J. D., LaPlaca, P., Al-Abdin, A., Breese, R., Khan, Zaheer. (2018). What do Introduction Sections Tell Us about The Intent of Scholarly Work: A Contribution on Contributions. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 206-219.
- K, Fitri Palupi. & Aziza, R. (2019). Cohesive Devices Analysis in Abstract Journal of Premise Volume 6 Number 2 In 2017. *Intensive Journal*. 2 (2), 93-105.
- Saragih, N., Silalahi, R., & Pardede, H. (2014). The Effectiveness of Using Recount Text to Improve Writing Skill For Grade III Students of Kalam Kudus Elementary School 2 Pematangsiantar. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. 19 (1), 56-64.
- Weigle, S.C. (2002). *Assessing Writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.