

A STUDY ON GRAMMATICAL COHESION IN THE DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS BY THE THIRD SEMESTER STUDENTS OF ENGLISH EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MATARAM IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2019/2020

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating the use of grammatical cohesion in the descriptive essays which were written by the third-semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram in the academic year 2019/2020. In detail, it was aimed to identify the types and the frequent types of grammatical cohesive devices which were used by the students in writing their essays. This study used the 21 third-semester students' descriptive essays as the resource of the data and they were analyzed by using the descriptive qualitative method. The results of this research show that all types of grammatical cohesive devices are found in the analyzed essays. There are reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Among those four types which were found, reference occurred 1011 times or (83.6%) out of the total number of grammatical cohesive devices that were found in the students' essays, it becomes the most predominantly used grammatical cohesive device by the students. Followed by conjunction for existing 179 times or (14.8%), and then there is ellipsis with 17 times occurrences or (1.4%), meanwhile, substitution becomes the least prominent type used by the students with only 2 times occurrences or (0.2%) in their essays. The reference became the most used type from the other types is likely to happen because they are more familiar to use it. The frequent use of reference in the students' essays can be interpreted as an attempt to minimize the repetition of people's names, objects, and events occurring in the same essays.

Keywords: *Grammatical cohesion, essay writing, descriptive essay*

INTRODUCTION

Language has an important role in life. It is as the primary means through which humans have the ability to communicate or interact to one another, because communication needs language as a tool. Communication tool is divided into two types, those are spoken and written communications. An example of spoken communication is daily conversation with family and friends. Meanwhile, in written form, such as text, e-mail, social media, and newspaper. Through language, human can share their ideas, feelings, thoughts, and emotions to one another. There are various languages which appear all over the world, this generally makes the distance between speaker and listener. One of the most used languages nowadays is English. English becomes the international language because it allows people to minimize the distance. As international

language, it is used to support various aspects of human life, such as technology, education and other aspects supporting human life.

In teaching and learning, English has five skills, those are listening, reading, speaking, writing, and translation. From all of the skills, speaking and writing are determined as the productive skills, which means the user of language should produce the language in spoken and written form.

It is possible to claim that writing is the most difficult skill among the other skills. Richard and Renandya (2002) state that writing is the most difficult skill for the second language and foreign-language learners. Furthermore, they claim that writing is not only generating and organizing ideas in our mind, but also translating these ideas into a readable text. Based on their arguments, many learners particularly those of foreign language

learners have some degrees of difficulties in writing. English as Foreign Language (EFL) students sometimes get confused about the cohesiveness of the writing, thus they tend to put their entire focus only on the content. Whereas, students should take into account into the information that will be presented on the writing in which that must be in an organized format that reserve the discourse meaning and value, such as cohesion and coherence.

Cohesion and coherence are the things to take into account in producing a good writing. Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize the importance of cohesion as well as coherence discourse in order to achieve well-constructed and understandable writing. Thus, these elements contribute to the readability of a writing and have an impact on the comprehensibility of the argument. If these two elements are lacking in a text, then it can cause misunderstanding between the writer and the reader regarding to the meaning of the sentences in a text.

Renkema (1993) explains that cohesion always deals with connection evident in the discourse Cohesion is a factor that indicates whether a paragraph or an essay is well-connected or merely a group of unrelated sentences. Halliday and Hasan(1976) introduce two types of cohesion in English. They are grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction, while lexical cohesion is divided into two broad types, reiteration and collocation.

Undergraduate students of English Education Program are required to produce essay writing in English. Essay writing is one of the major courses that students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram should master in addition to any other types of writing such as paragraph writing, argumentative writing, and academic writing in order to enhance their writing skill. Thus, whether

it is a formal or non-formal type of essay, students have responsibility to overcome these types of writing.

An essay writing is any short composition in prose that undertakes to discuss the matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject (Abrams, 1993). It is as a learning process that gives a contribution to the students in modifying the language and the information as well as developing and organizing their ideas through written form. Consequently, they are also engaged to clarify their own thoughts and to strengthen their conviction. In writing an essay students must pay attention to the use of cohesion in order to make the essay well-structured and understandable. Students also have to take into consideration into demonstrating and expressing their ideas clearly in the essay in order to make a good writing.

In relation to the previous statements, this research will analyze the grammatical cohesion on descriptive essays which are written by the third semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram, in an attempt to show the importance of grammatical cohesion in a text. Likewise, the main aim is to describe the types of grammatical cohesive devices which are found in the students' essay.

METHOD

This research was conducted by using the qualitative approach since it is intended to analyze the types and the frequent types of grammatical that are used in the students' essays. The participants of this research were the 21 third-semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram in the academic year 2019/2020. These 21 participants were purposefully selected from all of the third semester students of English Education Program in order to provide necessary data and develop a detailed

understanding of the phenomenon. In this case, those participants were homogeneous in terms of language background, as their daily language is Indonesia and their target language is English. In addition, all of them have completed the essay writing course in the previous semester. The data of this research were collected from the descriptive essays written by the 21 third-semester students of English Education Program in Mataram University.

There are 21 essays which have been analyzed in this study. The research used students' essays by selecting the types of grammatical cohesive devices as the object which that are found in the students' essays. The method of collecting data used in this study was documentation analysis which is focused on analyzing the essays. The data were analyzed through some steps: reading the essays, identifying the

grammatical cohesive devices in the students' essays, classifying the cohesive device items that were found into their type, calculating the grammatical cohesive devices in the essays, interpreting the data and drawing a conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The types of grammatical cohesive devices used by the students in their essays?

After analyzing the data, all the types of grammatical cohesive devices were found in the students' descriptive essays. These are reference, ellipsis, substitution, and conjunction. The frequency and percentage of the grammatical cohesive devices which were used by the students' in their descriptive essays are presented in the following table:

Table 1. The Frequency & Percentage of Grammatical Cohesive Devices Used in the Students' Essays

No	Types of Cohesive Devices	Number of Frequency	Percentage
1	Reference	1011	83.6%
2	Substitution	2	0.2%
3	Ellipsis	17	1.4%
4	Conjunction	179	14.8%
	Total	1209	100%

Based on Table 1, reference is the most frequent use of grammatical cohesive devices in the students' essays. It is prominently used for 1011 times or 83.6% out of the 1209 data. While the second place holds by conjunction with 179 times

used or 14.8% out of the total number of the data. The next is ellipsis for 17 times or 1.4% out of the occurrences. Meanwhile, the least prominently used is substitution for only 2 times or 0.2% out of the 1209 data.

Table 2: The Frequency and Percentage of Reference Occurrence in the Students' Descriptive Essays

No	Types of Reference	Number of Frequency	Percentage
1	Personal	647	64%
2	Demonstrative	348	34.4%
3	Comparative	16	1.6%
	Total	1011	100%

In Table 2, it is apparent that reference is the most frequently used of cohesive device types. The use of

reference such as personal pronouns and demonstratives are important because they

can provide the concept of identifiability and establish anaphoric relations.

The high frequency of using reference as cohesive device may be caused of the point that types of reference are used as a part of a sentence when it should have subject, modifier, or object. While the low frequency of using comparative reference may suggests that the ideas or things in the descriptive essays are not necessarily to be compared or it could also be suggested as the students might have used the other devices in

comparing one item to the other items in the essays.

Substitution is the least used by students in their essays. Because out of 1209 data, substitution only occurs 2 times or 0.2%. The occurrence of substitution is only shown by verbal substitution.

Ellipsis has existed 17 times or 1.4% in students' essays. The same as substitution, there was only one type of ellipsis which was used by students in their essays. It was nominal ellipsis.

Table 3: The Frequency and Percentage of Conjunction Occurrence in the Students' Descriptive Essays

No	Types of Conjunctions	Number of Frequency	Percentage
1	Additive	47	26.3%
2	Adversative	29	16.2%
3	Causal	63	35.2%
4	Temporal	40	22.3%
	Total	179	100%

From Table 3, we can see that the highest frequency of conjunction types that were used by students in their essays is causal conjunction with 63 times occurrences or 35.2% out of 179 data of conjunction items. Then, followed by the additive one with 47 times occurrences or 26.3%. The next is the temporal with 40 times occurrences or 22.3% and the last is adversative conjunction with 29 times of occurrences or 16.2% out of 179 data.

The following points are the explanation and interpretation of how the students used grammatical cohesive devices in their essays.

The Use of Reference Personal Reference

The descriptive essays which were written by students presented the discussion of various topics. The topic presented in students' essays included describing people, objects, or things that they are interested in. In every single essay, there are frequent occurrences of

people, objects, or things especially the proper noun or keyword of the essays which are based on the topic of each essay. Therefore, the frequent use of reference is needed to minimize the repetition of people's names, objects, and things occurring in the same essay.

Example 1: Second, Harni has a very melodious voice. When she sings, she is so immersed in her song that it makes her listeners unable to take their eyes of her. (essay 5, paragraph 3, sentence 1-2)

Example 2: I would like to describe this place to you in detail. (essay 19, paragraph 1, sentence 6)

Example 3: The reason why visiting foreign country is interesting because we can meet new people. (essay 20, paragraph 2, sentence 1)

Example 4:, it must be supported by high intellectual abilities. (essay 1, paragraph 3, sentence 15)

The use of personal pronouns as personal reference is not only to avoid repetition and redundancy but also to establish cohesion within the text by linking the referent and the pronoun itself. In Example 1, 'she' indicates that there must be a referent in the essay whether it refers backward (anaphoric) or refers forward (cataphoric) to any other element in the essay. Thus the Example 1 shows that 'she' refers backward in the word 'Harni' which already has been mentioned earlier.

In Example 2, it used 'I' and 'you'. Singular personal 'I' was used concerning descriptive essays purpose, that they try to describe the thing which is related to their personal experience. This refers to the author itself. While 'you' was used to refer to those who read the essay or the reader of the essay. This type of reference is called exophoric reference (situational reference) because the referent can not be found in the essay otherwise it is needed to consider the context of speaking to understand to whom 'I' and 'you' referred to.

The students not only used 'I' and 'you' in their essays but they also used 'we' as in Example 3. In this case, 'we' is an exophoric reference, the same as 'I' and 'you' in the previous example. But 'we' is interpreted as referring both to the author and the reader of the essays. Students often used this item in their descriptive essays simply to share the same feelings with the readers. And to show that in describing something they are involving the reader which means that they expect that the readers are those who share the same knowledge and emotions to them.

In Example 4, 'it' is referred to the previous element, which is about the fact or the statement about something. Oftentimes, 'it' is used to embody a place, an object, or a non-human thing. Yet, this example indicates 'it' also has another function as the reference item. This

implies that students know the other use of 'it'.

However, all types of personal references were found in the students' essays. The examples above are as the representative of the use of reference items in the students' essays.

Demonstrative Reference

The following provides examples of how 'the' was used:

Example 1: The college student is not only staying on campus. (essay 1, paragraph 1, sentence 5)

Example 2: And it is good opportunity to introduce our culture to the world by students to show our cultures. (essay 6, paragraph 3, sentence 11)

The demonstrative reference 'the' is a specifying agent. As a cohesive device, 'the' can link previous information to new information in the essay. For instance, in example 1 above, 'the' which precedes the phrase 'college student' suggests that the information or the phrase has already been mentioned previously in the essay. Thus, this builds the anaphoric relation. This type of demonstrative reference indicates that the item referred to is identifiable in the essay. However, in other instances, it could be in the exophoric type, where the item referred to is not found within the essay. This is shown in example 2, 'the' which precedes the noun 'world' suggests that both the writer and the readers know exactly the specific item being referred to.

The following are examples of how 'this/that/these/those' were used:

Example 1: I feel so carefree and idyllic when doing this activity. (essay 7, paragraph 4, sentence 17)

Example 2: In my life, that person is definitely my mother. (essay 13, paragraph 1, sentence 2)

Example 3: But in my case, those jobs are a burden for me even though the money is big and the income is solid. (essay 2, paragraph 1, sentence 5)

This type of demonstrative reference is typically used to indicate distance. For example, 'this' and 'these' indicate nearness, while 'that' and 'those' indicate remoteness of the item being referred to. However, in written discourse, they are used to link item to the previously given information rather than to indicate distance.

In Example 1, the demonstrative 'this' which precedes the word 'activity' suggests that the previous information about the 'activity' has been mentioned in the previous sentence. The same use as 'that' in Example 2 which suggests that the 'person' that the writer means has already been mentioned in the previous sentence. As well as the use of 'those' in Example 3, shows the ideas about 'job' that this demonstrative reference type referred to has already been stated in the previous sentence.

Comparative Reference

Comparative reference is rarely used by the students in their essay compared to the other two reference types. Comparative reference differs from the other types of reference in which it is based on reference item which is interpreted not by being identified with what has gone before, but by being compared with. These are the example of how students used the comparative reference:

Example 1: Teacher is someone who gives dedication to not only teach but also guide their students to be better than before. Every teacher has their own reason in doing such things. (essay 11, paragraph 1, sentence 1-2)

Example 2: They also will increase their social skills and confidence by having a lot of friends from another country. (essay 6, paragraph 5, sentence 5)

With regard to Example 1, the word 'such' refers to the previous information in the essay. The 'things' is referred to in terms of likeness to the actions mentioned in the previous sentence. While in Example 2, the word 'another' which precedes the word 'country' refers to the previous information in the essay, with the 'country' is referred in terms of dissimilarity with the country which has been mentioned earlier.

The Use of Substitution

Substitution is the least prominent type of grammatical cohesive device used in students' essays. There were only two times occurrence of substitution, and they are a verbal substitution. They were found only in essay 15. The followings are examples of how the student used the verbal substitution:

Example 1: They can not play around like they would do in the wild.

Example 2: It is like a prisoner sharing their cell with a inmate, except people are throwing food at the lion, which they do not do to prisoners.

In Example 1, 'do' as the verbal substitution item substitutes 'play around'. The same as Example 2, 'do' substitutes 'throwing food'.

The student used verbal substitution to avoid the repetition of the same verb as in the previous statement. This suggests that only this student who is familiar with the function of substitution. Because in the other students' essays, there is no substitution found. This also may be because the use of substitution is often found more in speaking than in writing or perhaps the other student has not been familiar with this type of grammatical cohesive device.

The Use of Ellipsis

Even though the frequency of ellipsis in students' essays is higher than the frequency of substitution, there is only

one type of ellipsis which was used by the students in their writing. That is a nominal ellipsis, it is found 17 times in some of the students' essays. The example of how the students used nominal ellipsis in their essays:

Example: Gili Trawangan is one of three Gilis located in North Lombok, the other two Ø are Meno and Air. (essay 3, paragraph 1, sentence 2)

In the example above, 'the other two' means 'the other two Gilis'. It is valid to put the word 'Gilis' after 'the other two'.

The use of nominal ellipsis facilitates students to control the number of words which were used to express the information. On the other hand, ellipsis is found only in some of the students' essays. This is probably because they do not get used to using ellipsis in their writing or perhaps they have not been familiar with this type of cohesive device.

The Use of Conjunction

Conjunction is in second place as the most used grammatical cohesive device. The followings are how each conjunction type was used by students in their essays, starting from the dominant to the least one:

Causal Conjunction

Example 1: Because we do not know who was injected by the corona virus, that is why social distancing is the best option that we have now. (essay 10, paragraph 2, sentence 16)

Example 2: So, I climb high to the mountains, leaving behind the calm and peace of sunny forests and meadows. (essay 19, paragraph 4, sentence 20)

The use of causal conjunction is to show the effect of the previous information. In Example 1, it shows the effect of doing social distancing for the author and the readers. In Example 2, it

denotes the results of the previous information in the essays. In using causal conjunction, the students know well about various kinds of causal conjunction such as 'since', 'therefore', 'hence', 'for this reason' and etc.

Additive Conjunction

Additive conjunction frequently appeared in students' writing. The following examples show how they were used in the students' descriptive essays:

Example 1: And also certainly have their own reason why they choose to be student who are active in college activities and the activities of the organization. (essay 4, paragraph 3, sentence 14)

Example 2: In addition, Kuta beach has a breathtaking sunset with its bright orange shine above the sea level. (essay 14, paragraph 2, sentence 14)

Example 3: Moreover, being a teacher means as if we got a glass and the water. (essay 7, paragraph 2, sentence 8)

Example 4: For example an American or Canadian shakes our hands firmly while looking us straight in the eyes. (essay 20, paragraph 4, sentence 20)

The use of additive conjunction in students' essays shows that it is to add new information to the previous information. This indicates that there is continuity of ideas within the essays.

In the students' essays, they used various types of additive conjunctions as what has been shown in the examples above to indicate that there is something more to be stated. Not only did they use the common additive conjunction such as 'and' and 'also' but also they used the other alternatives like 'in addition', 'moreover', 'additionally', 'moreover' and etc. This may suggest that the students' knowledge of additive conjunction is good.

Temporal Conjunction

Example 1: First, she has a kind heart.
(essay 5, paragraph 2, sentence 1)

Example 2: In conclusion, college students are not just new degrees we have. (essay 1, paragraph 5, sentence 21)

The students used many temporal conjunctions in their essays. They used many of them probably because they wanted to show sequence to start the paragraph that enhancing the thesis statement of the essay as in Example 1 above. The use of temporal conjunction as shown in Example 2 is, to sum up the informations that have been described before in the essays.

The students are very familiar with this conjunction type. Because they also used the other kind of temporal conjunction to indicate sequence and summarize information in the last paragraph of the essays such as 'firstly..secondly...', 'in summarize', 'finally', etc. This type of conjunction is the most used by the students in their essays.

Adversative Conjunction

Example 1: **But** this advantage makes the millennial generation want everything instantly..... (essay 9, paragraph 2, sentence 10)

Example 2: **However**, for approximately six months the learning process was carried out online,..... (essay 8, paragraph 1, sentence 5)

The use of adversative conjunction in students' essays is to add opposing information to the previous information. In Example 1, the conjunction 'but' indicates the negative effect as opposed to the positive information beforehand. And in Example 2, to add opposing additional information to the previous one.

The use of the conjunction 'but' is quite frequent as this suggests that they are

very familiar with 'but'. They can also use 'yet' rather than use 'but' the most. However, in their essays, the students also used any other kinds of adversative to create cohesiveness, such as 'in fact', 'nevertheless', and 'nonetheless'.

DISCUSSION

The investigation of the use of grammatical cohesive devices in the descriptive essays which were written by the 21 third semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram showed some interesting results. The primary analysis was based on identifying the types and the frequent types of grammatical cohesive devices used by the students in their essays. In this sense, the descriptive qualitative method was used to find out the result of this study.

The finding revealed that the students used numerous grammatical cohesive devices in their essay writings in which reference with 1011 times occurrence or 83.6% was the most frequently used of grammatical cohesive devices by the students. Meanwhile, substitution with only 2 times occurrence or 0.2% became the lowest percentage of the grammatical cohesive devices used by the students.

This result is similar to the finding of some researchers who investigated the cohesion research that showed the reference was the highest frequency of the cohesive devices while substitution (0.1%) was the least one from the total of the cohesive devices (Alarcon & Morales 2011; Rahman, 2017). It implies that most students tend to use the reference to create cohesion by creating links between elements (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). It also indicates that they had sufficient knowledge to use it when they were writing. On the other hand, this is likely to happen because the substitution was not familiar to the students so that it almost did not appear in the students' essay writing.

Conjunction (9.2%) becomes the second most used of grammatical cohesive devices is in line with some research that specifically studied grammatical cohesive devices in essay writing. The result of those research showed that conjunction was also the frequent use of grammatical cohesive devices after reference. It is similar to the finding done by Rahman (2017) which revealed that the use of the reference and conjunction as the dominant devices in the grammatical cohesive devices. In this sense, it means that the students are familiar enough to use them in creating the links between one element and another element in the essay. Meanwhile, ellipsis (0.9%) is not far from the substitution. It means that the use of ellipsis is rarely found in the students' essay writings.

CONCLUSIONS

Referring to the results of the analysis of the data, it can be inferred that the types of grammatical cohesive devices used in the descriptive essays written by the 3rd semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram in the academic year 2019/2020 are reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction. Regarding to their frequency of occurrence (from the highest to the lowest frequency), the order is as follows: reference 1011 data (83.6%), conjunction 179 data (14.8%), ellipsis 17 data (1.5%), and substitution for only 2 data (0.2%) as the least prominent type.

Reference and conjunction are the prominent types of grammatical cohesive devices which are used on descriptive essays written by the 3rd semester students of English Education Program in the University of Mataram in the academic year 2019/2020. This because reference and conjunction dominate the occurrences of the grammatical cohesive devices type compared to the occurrences of ellipsis and substitution. The items which dominate the occurrence of reference are personal

reference (647 times or 64%) out of 1011 data of reference items and demonstrative reference (348 times or 34.4%). The second prominent type is conjunction with the dominant items are causal conjunction (63 times or 35.2%) out of the total number of conjunction data which were found and additive conjunction becomes the second most used with (47 times or 26.3%).

In using grammatical cohesive devices, it seems that the students understand some of the types of grammatical cohesive device items which were very well while for the other items they may still have limited knowledge of the type or how to use each of the item. For example, the students seem to be familiar with reference and conjunction rather than with ellipsis and substitution. Because the use of reference and conjunction are the most dominant for grammatical cohesive devices.

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