

Mapping cohesive device usage to analyze non-native writers' needs in academic English

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Abstract: Native or non-native English-speaking academics are compelled to write scientific articles in internationally reputable indexed journals today. With high demand of academic English, more and more articles are rejected by the editorial board for various reasons, mainly in the cohesion and coherence of their writing. This research seeks to map the types and patterns of cohesive device used to support the coherence of scientific articles. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, this study compared the use of cohesion devices (CD) by both groups' writing (native & non-native) to further bridge the difficulties faced by non-native writers in shaping their academic writing cohesively and coherently. This study may also serve as a needs analysis that allows for the creation of models, materials, and teaching approaches to scientific article writing for learners of English as a foreign language.

Keywords: cohesive device, coherence, academic writing, non-native speakers, needs analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important skill in the teaching and learning process through which students can convey ideas, thoughts, and opinions to readers to build communication and information sharing. Furthermore, writing is a productive skill where students produce messages through written text (Andayani et al., 2014; Purwanto, 2019; Septiawan, 2020). So, they have to compile elements of language skills such as word choice, spelling, and grammar structure so that language is easy to understand. Harmer (2007) adds that writing must be well organized so that it is understood by the reader.

The quality of writing is determined by the ability to communicate ideas into good writing (Hyland, 2019). In the writing process, students must be able to arrange sentences in a logical structure so that readers can understand the meaning of the text. Halliday and Hasan (2014) add that the text is best regarded as a semantic unit: the unit is not of form but of meaning. This means that the text must have meaning in the form of sentences for language users or people who use language for communication. According to Renkema (2004) seven criteria play roles in understanding a text, namely cohesion, coherence, informativeness, intentionality, acceptability, situationality, and intertextuality. Thus, a text must keep these elements to be understood by the reader. In addition, people need to have knowledge of cohesion to be able to produce communicative texts. A text will be stronger if the author considers aspects of cohesion and coherence. It is cohesive when elements are bound together and are considered meaningful to the reader (Bahaziq, 2016).

Halliday and Hasan (2014) defined cohesion as a semantic relationship between one element and another in the text. It occurs when the elements interpret other items that connect with each other. So, cohesion is a linguistic bond or linguistic device that has links to discourse or text unity. Cohesion is one of the basic characteristics that determine the quality of writing. It happens when one element depends on another in a text, which means they are connected to one another.

While coherence can be built into the text through the use of cohesion devices. Such linguistic devices help readers understand the text and makes it easier for them to interpret the content and meaning of the text. The use of cohesion devices is to connect each sentence in the text to create a texture. A good arrangement of text can be made if the author uses the correct cohesion device while the writer can avoid words that cannot be understood in expressing their ideas (Ahmed, 2010, p. 2). Pickering (1980) argues that cohesion is an element that ties together discourse linearly. This means that there is a link connecting one word to another so that it becomes a series of cohesive and coherent sentences.

Unfortunately, this cohesive and coherent writing ability is not easily possessed by non-native speakers even those working in higher education who have been compelled by the university to publish their work internationally reputable journals. With writing patterns referring, generally in their first language (Bahasa Indonesia), the use of cohesion devices to support writing coherence is assumed to be different from that employed by the native speaker writers. This needs to be seen empirically so that lecturers can have a more effective reference in using the cohesion device that supports that coherence. This article examines cohesive devise to support coherence by comparing the writings of English native speakers and foreign authors (Indonesian lecturers) to reveal what contributes to the differences.

Difficulties in Academic Writing

Oshima and Hogue (2007) explain that writing is an activity that is progressing. Progress means that before writing, the writer must think about what he will say and how he will say it. This means that one does not only have to think about how to express ideas but also arrange them into good writing in order to communicate the message.

Furthermore, Broardman and Frydenberg (2008, p. 11) argue that writing is the process of thinking and organizing, rethinking, and rearranging. This means that the writing process continues from thinking about ideas to rearranging ideas to deliver messages effectively. By mastering writing, students will continue to think and organize ideas before delivering them in their communication in written form.

Referring to the definition above, it can be agreed that writing is a complex activity of verbally modifying into written language based on English grammar and correct sentence structure. This activity cannot be separated from the purpose of writing that conveys and explores ideas, thoughts, and feelings in written form.

According to Harmer (2007), the writing process is a step that explains how to produce writing into a good paragraph. The author needs to understand the writing process and apply this process to one's work. In the writing process, the writer must be able to arrange sentences into good paragraphs so that the writing will be more easily understood by the reader.

Harmer (2007) categorizes the writing process into four elements. They plan, compile, edit (reflect and revise), and finish writing. To go through all these processes the author needs to review his writing many times in order to see cohesion and coherence and whether the writing that he made will be able to be understood by the reader. For this reason, knowledge of the cohesion device specifically in English is needed especially by the authors of academic texts.

Academic writing refers to the style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific fields of expertise. The characteristics of academic writing include the use of formal expressions, the use of a third person perspective, focus on the research problem being investigated, and the choice of the right words. Like specialist languages adopted in other professions, such as law or medicine, academic writing is designed to convey agreed-upon meanings of complex ideas or concepts for a group of scientific experts in a particular field.

Many experts associate this academic writing ability with communicative and discourse competence. Canale and Swain (1981), for example, in a version slightly adapted from the Canale and Swain (1981) models, defines discourse competence as 'mastery of how to combine and interpret meanings and forms to achieve integrated text in different modes by using (a) cohesion devices to connect forms and (b) rules of coherence to regulate meaning. Similarly, in discussing models relating to language assessment, Bachman (1990) included in the domain of communicative competence what he called 'textual competence', which involved cohesion and rhetorical organization.

Academic writing is also often associated as a separate 'genre' in the world of English writing. Eggins and Martin (1997) states 'different genres of different ways to achieve different established tasks, and texts of different genres that are of different purposes in the culture'. Knapp and Watkins (2005) also suggest that the structure and grammar of a text are determined by its genre: 'the general features

(structure and grammar) of the genre that describe, for example, remain constant for all authors, from descriptions of experience. Initial author, up to the scientific description of high school students.

In short, this article presents an initial attempt to develop discursive competence of beginner writers using these frameworks, devices and types of expertise. As a result, achieving discursive competence is the ability to deconstruct, understand and reconstruct discourse in a way that is linguistically correct and socially appropriate, but also in ways in which the lecturers as individuals can achieve their own communicative goals according to their own publication goals. Thus, this is part of teaching academic writing to help beginner writers achieve success, which they want in the international expertise community they want to enter.

Cohesion and its significance in writing

Cohesion is a semantic relationship between elements in the text. The concept of cohesion is a semantic unit; This refers to the relationship of meaning in the text (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). This means that cohesion occurs when sentences from elements interpret other items that connect with each other.

Renkema (2004, p. 103) defines cohesion as connections that have their manifestations in the discourse itself. This means that cohesion is a very important device for understanding certain discourses. In addition, Baker (1992) adds that cohesion is a network of lexical structures and other relationships that provide relationships between many parts of the text. He also said that there are devices that contribute to providing links between parts, they are usually referred to as cohesive devices.

Furthermore, Harmer (2007) argues that cohesion occurs through grammatical and lexical relationships. This will help the reader to understand the text. Baker (1992, p. 180) also adds that cohesion is the surface relationship that connects actual words and expressions. In short, cohesion is a semantic relationship that has a relationship between one sentence and another. It can be said that there are linguistic devices that make the unity of the text.

Halliday and Hasan (2014) provide taxonomy of cohesion which is divided into two main categories namely grammatical and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is further divided into four categories: reference, substitution, ellipse, and conjunction. Lexical cohesion is divided into two categories: repetition and collocation. This taxonomy is used as a device for understanding the use of cohesion in understanding in this study.

Towards Coherence

Coherence is a term used to refer to the relationship of understanding between a single unit (sentence or proposition) of a text. Because of these relationships, the text appears to be consistent and logical semantically for the reader-listener. Text analysis that focuses on coherence is primarily concerned with the construction and configuration of senses in the text namely how single constituents are connected so that the text becomes meaningful to the recipient rather than being a random sequence of unrelated sentences and clauses.

Halliday and Hasan (2014) distinguishes between coherence and cohesion in terms of internal and external relations of a clause. Coherence is “internal resources for compiling clauses as messages”, including ideas about ‘themes’ and ‘information’, and cohesion refers to the external relationship between clauses and complex clauses, which do not depend on grammatical structures. (Brinker, 2005, pp. 21–22) shows that textual structures can be analyzed both at grammatical and thematic levels, which is related to the syntactic-semantic relationship between sentences (cohesion) and logic-semantic relationships that are built between propositions to make thematic structures.

The question of the functional relationship between cohesion and coherence has aroused much debate, most of the controversy addresses whether cohesion is a sufficient criterion for textual coherence or not. In some cases, coherence has been considered a subject, or pre-conditioned by, cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 2014). Halliday and Hasan (2014) even state that cohesion is “merely the source of texture”. But these views are strongly opposed by others (Brinker, 2005; Brown, 2007).

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive quantitative method which was intended to accurately describe the phenomenon or problem observed by the researcher. Taylor et al. (2015) state that this method is research that provides procedures that are explained by descriptive data in written or oral form. This

means that it is a research procedure that can produce descriptive but indicative results based on rigorous data analysis.

The subjects of this study were two categories: (1) 20 journal articles written and published in English by lecturers in a State Teachers College. We only chose the writing of those who wrote it alone or in partners (with co-authors) without involving native speakers to ensure that the writing was the work of non-native speakers of English. (2) 20 journal articles that have been indexed and internationally reputed are written by authors whose first language is English. The first group was selected based on variations in the author's background taken from different faculties, departments and study programs. The second group also employed the same variation technique to see the diversity of data. In these texts, words, sentences, phrases and clauses connected by cohesive devices such as references, conjunctions, ellipsis, and substitutions were analyzed.

To collect data accurately about the use of cohesive devices in the two categories mentioned above, the researcher used the technique to see and note (Sudaryanto, 2015). His method was used to collect data by observing language usage; in this study, observation is not in the form of oral sources but written sources. The researcher read the text then marked and recorded the relevant data (note technique). This technique was done by noting and coding relevant data from written sources in the form of selected sample articles. The author used the data table by rewriting the data and applying the coding to the data sheet for analysis. These data were analyzed descriptively through manual coding and categorization. In coding the data, the researchers used the initial letters of the reference word (R), substitution (S), ellipsis (E), conjunction (C), and lexical (L) to facilitate the analysis of data. The use of data sheets was aimed to enable data classification. The data sheet was adapted from (Halliday & Hasan, 2014) as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Data Tabulation

Stc	No	Cohesion	Type	Ref
1.				
2.				

The researchers processed the collected data during the study through several techniques such as changing, skipping, and reading markers (Sudaryanto, 2015, pp. 41–45). After coding and recording the relevant data from the source text, the researcher supplied the recorded data into the table to see the aggregate. From data aggregation, each use of the Cohesion Device (CD) will get the type and amount of use from the two sample groups. Differences, and interesting numbers were then compared between the two groups so that trends could be seen and examined.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To verify the selected data after the process of reading the collected text, the researcher encoded the data. This process was done manually by marking the text being analyzed and separating parts which would be analyzed further. The following is an example of the coding process that we conducted in order to select data for further analysis. This data sample was taken from a non-native speaker of English (NNS) author of which shows the number of repetitions used in writing (Figure 1).

Table 2. Categories of devices

No.	Excerpts		Types	NS	NNS
1.	<i>participants</i>	<i>they/them</i>	GC Ref	178	81
2.	<i>element</i>	<i>the others</i>	GC Sub	114	63
3.	<i>two factors</i>	<i>both</i>	GC Elip	78	84
4.	<i>contrast, add, cause</i>	<i>although, and, so</i>	GC Con	81	70
				451	258
5.	<i>students</i>	<i>students</i>	LC Rep	43	79
6.	<i>research</i>	<i>investigation</i>	LC Syn	67	52
7.	<i>effective</i>	<i>unsuccessful</i>	LC Ant	20	12
8.	<i>questionnaire</i>	<i>instrument</i>	LC Hyp	9	6
9.	<i>collect</i>	<i>data</i>	LC Coll	14	17
				153	166
	<i>TOTAL</i>			604	424
	<i>AVERAGE</i>			30.2	21.2

Through the pre-set coding process, this research could classify the collected data into two main categories of Grammatical Cohesion (GC) and Lexical Cohesion (LC) devices. Furthermore, the types of each GC and LC were also specified whether the GC, for example, was included in the types of References, Substitutions, Ellipsis, or Conjunctions. Similarly, the LCs were narrowed down again, respectively into Repetition, Synonyms, Antonyms, and Hyponyms and Collocation.

The cohesion device (CD) was split into two types according to the literature into GC and LC which were then broken down into four and five categories respectively. Our data shows that, in aggregate, foreign authors, who are native speakers of English, use CD more than our sample in the second group who are lecturers in a state-owned teachers' college in Indonesia (NNS). This first group employed about fifty percent (50%) more CDs than our internal lecturers (NNS) in the collected writing samples.

Abstract—today, spiritual development through physical education is an unthinkable way to strengthen a harmonious society capable of contributing to the nation's character. Hence, this study aims to examine the effect of three types of physical education programs on children's religiosity and spirituality. For this study, 15 physical education teachers and 881 fourth to sixth-grade children participated in the study. The physical education programs were implemented over in the second semester of the 2015-2016 academic year. The data used was collected applying the 37 items of Religiosity and Spirituality Scale for Youth (RaSSY) (Hernandez, 2011) before and after of the program. Two- and one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) and paired sample t-tests were used to compare the three groups. There was a significant interaction between the test and groups of mean religiosity and spirituality scores. The analysis also found a significant increase in the mean of these in the first and third groups. The planned, executed, and measured special physical education program in the first and third groups is an effective way to improve the religiosity and spirituality of the children.

Keywords— Spirituality, Religiosity, Physical Education

Figure 1. Sampel of repetitions used in writing

From that comparison, if sorted on the basis of the type of CD, the use of GC by NS dominated with a comparison that was almost similar to the comparison of aggregate data. While the use of LC was almost balanced between the two groups of writers, even NNS, it could be said, used a little more LC. This could be important indications in the discussion later.

Of the few advantages of using the LC, there were interesting findings, namely the dominance of the use of LC in the type of repetition used by NNS. Our data show that NNS tended to use LC Repetition almost twice as many as NS. The use of collocation techniques was also slightly more carried out by NNS than NS although in terms of accuracy errors or inaccuracies often occurred.

Discussion

From the findings above there are some interesting points to discuss in order to obtain a better picture of the numbers and comparisons presented in the previous section. For example, whether the superiority of the number and frequency of the use of CD in certain types illustrates the tendency and level of writing of each group, and whether the phenomena that we found are in line, different even contrary to the existing literature and theory. For that we need to discuss it in a comprehensive account by referring to the relevant literature and theory as we broke out in the following sub-sections.

Cohesive device and writing quality

Our findings suggest that the NS group of writers demonstrate more varied repertoire of CD than their NNS counterpart based on what they put in writing particularly in terms of grammatical cohesion. It would be interesting to compare what has been found in the following literature. (Meisuo, 2000) investigated the importance of various elements of grammar and discourse in testing samples of second language writing and found that assessors relied heavily on cohesion in evaluating the overall quality of essays. It also points to the idea of considering CD as an important element in assessing the quality of essays. Meanwhile, Lee (1992) investigated how CD was used in the composition of 107 Chinese scholars through both quantitative and qualitative methods. Almost similar to the current study, this

research found that lexical devices were used most often, fewer conjunctions and reference devices were used and certain CDs included ambiguity in references, overuse and misuse of conjunctions, and limited use of lexical cohesion.

Lee (1992) conducted a study with 16 ESL students to reveal whether explicit teaching about devices that create coherence can contribute to written coherence and find positive relationships between pedagogical material based on promoting CD and increasing student writing. Meanwhile, Meisuo (2000) studied the application of CD in 50 argumentative compositions written by Chinese students in non-English majors and found that among the various CDs, lexical cohesion (LC) was the most commonly used, followed by references and conjunctives. She claimed that the number of LC is significantly related to the quality of writing, which is arguable based on our present study findings. However, it was identified that there were several problems in applying references and lexical devices.

Examining students in various writing sessions, Olateju (2006) researched the extent to which ESL students achieve cohesion. This study reveals that students do not have competence in using CD. In studies of cohesion in spoken English, Wu (2006) found that substitutions and ellipsis were ignored and CD forms were less used. Like this study, it also explains that foreign language students may use fewer such devices even in their verbal performance, which is different from what is generally thought.

Field and Oi (1992) in Hong Kong examined the use of three types of CDs, say, references, conjunctions, and lexis in essays of 150 foreign language students who referred to their narrative and descriptive essays. They found that the three easiest writing tools were CD long distance, direct CD, and mediating CD and the three most difficult writing tools were temporal conjunction, causal conjunction, and conflict conjunction. Several studies have indicated the problems that L2 authors have when writing (Crewe, 1990; Wu, 2006) and particularly in appropriately and correctly employing cohesive devices.

Native and Non-native author comparison

Identical to the NNS sample in the current study, according to Khalil (1989), Arabic students frequently use repetition of the same lexical items as cohesive devices, while they use less lexical and other grammar CDs. Analyzing less qualified writings from Hong Kong college students, (Crewe, 1990) acknowledges two problems: using multiple links without distinguishing semantic differences, such as using the opposite, however, and using excessive links. The current study also found the use of *although* and *but* as double conjunctions simultaneously in one sentence.

In a different setting, Wikborg (1990) found that Swedish students often showed problems of cohesion ranging from connection of lost or misleading sentences to distances that were too far between cohesive items in cohesive chains to CDs that did not function in their writing. Johnson (1992) proved that there was no difference in the degree of cohesion between good and weak compositions written by native and Malay speakers.

Comparing 67 argumentative writings of Hong Kong students with the writings of 29 Australian students in English, (Field & Oi, 1992) concluded that these students use more conjunctions especially at the beginning of sentences. In connection with Palmer (1999) survey, Spanish-language student writings abound in repeating the same lexical items as cohesive devices, but LCs and other grammar are rare. This is the case considering the findings of Meisuo (2000) about the English language department of Chinese language scholars. Meisuo (2000) in a cohesion survey of 107 exposition essays of Chinese English students found that there were no differences in the number of CDs between good and weak essays. Dueraman (2006) study of cohesion and coherence in English narrative essays written by Malaysian and Thai medical students also explicitly supports the current study that both NNS groups use more syntactic (reference and conjunction) bonds than semantic ties (repetition and synonym).

Cohesive device and writing quality

There are positive and negative correlations between CD use and writing quality. To explain the concept of coherence and the relationship between cohesion and coherence, empirical studies have shown mixed results. On the one hand, several of them prove a positive correlation between the number of CDs and good writing (Ferris, 1994; Field & Oi, 1992; Liu & Braine, 2005). On the other hand, other studies have not shown a significant relationship between the number of CDs and the quality of writing (Castro, 2004; Jafarpur, 1991b; Johnson, 1992; Meisuo, 2000; Neuner, 1987). Among those studies, two studies (ie, Liu & Braine, 2005; Meisuo, 2000) were conducted in China and one in Iran (Jafarpur, 1991a). Like the current study, these studies concentrate on the frequency of discourse markers (DM)

used in student writing, some investigate the use of DM in one language (L1 or L2) and the other compares the frequency of CD usage between L1 and L2.

Karasi (1994), for example, examined 135 expository essays by Singaporean secondary school students and found no differences between native students and ESL in CD frequencies. Whereas Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) dissected CD used in persuasive essays by ESL students and revealed that the difference between high-ranked and bad essays was found in the number of words, T-units, and CD densities. Another study by Cheng and Steffensen (1996) examined argumentative texts written by learners who work on propositional content from their essays and are taught to use a process approach and focused on the pragmatic functions of CD by enjoying direct teaching from CD. The results show that students who receive direct instruction about CD use it more effectively and also become more sensitive to the needs of their readers, thus making significant changes that improve their writing. Hence, providing explicit instructions on the use of CD types by considering their difficulties is assumed to help learners improve their writing become more cohesive and coherent.

Further, Jalilifar (2008) following the CD classification Fraser (1999) focuses on CD in the descriptive composition of 90 Iranian EFL students of junior and senior schools. The research findings provide evidence that elaborative markers are the most frequently used, so that they can be inferred, contrasted and causative and the most rarely used are markers relating to the topic. A direct and positive relationship was also found between the quality of the composition and the number of DMs used.

CONCLUSION

From our analyzed data and compared to the theory and literature relevant to the field of study of this study, it can be concluded that NNS is still more likely to use CD in the form of LC. This is probably due to the easier use of the lexical level of LC than the GC which requires the writer to know the structure and relationship between sentences. It is not surprising if there are more GC usage in NS circles because the use of GC requires mastery of qualified grammar and skills to use it in the context of different sentences. The limited variability of NNS's writing style is likely relative to his restricted knowledge and proficiency in English.

This tendency could bring implications for the importance of introducing the use of CD especially GC because it will improve the quality and variability of the NNS writing style in particular and non-native speakers. The order of material must also be considered because it seems that LC is easier to use than GC, but the accuracy of its use needs to be considered. This means that in academic writing the LC category CD material should be given first to completion and correct then followed by GC material. We recommend this to avoid the complexity and misperception and practice of using these two types of CD to help compose cohesive and coherent writing.

However, with the limited number of samples that we have, more comparative studies need to be conducted by involving a larger number of samples. Given the evidence from other studies that the use of CD does not necessarily support coherence, it needs to be reassured through comparative research both with samples of academic texts and other types of texts. Our study indicates that native speakers tend to use more CDs specifically in the GC category whereas in the LC category there were similarities between the two groups of samples although with different levels of accuracy.

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