



Using Cohesive Devices during the course of Lectures “The lectures’ Role”

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Abstract

This research paper investigates the use and misuse of cohesive devices by 4th year students at Neelain University. The primary aim is to investigate the teacher’s role in encouraging the students to write well tided writing using cohesive devices in classes naturally when they perform their lectures. When English Language lecturers use these devices this will motivate the students as well to do the same and use them in writing and speaking. The findings of the study reveals that the lecturers use only some devices, for example reference and conjunction but they ignore using ellipsis and substitution, except native speakers who used all types of cohesion relations. A number of pedagogical recommendations and suggestions were included.

Keywords: Cohesion, Cohesive devices, Ellipsis, Conjunctions, Substitution.

Introduction

Overview: What is language? This is a question that puzzles many researchers and linguists, as a Muslim .God says in The Holly Book Qur’an “We create you nations and tribes, so as to know each other”. So language is a divine endowment for people to communicate and interact with each other. Language is the principal means used by human beings to communicate with each other. Language is primary spoken, although it can be transferred to other media, such as writing. If the speakers’ means of communication is unavailable, as may be the case among the deaf, visual means as sign language can be used. A prominent characteristic of language is the arbitrariness of the relation between a linguistic and its meaning. There is no reason other than convention among speakers of English language that “a dog” should be called “dog”, and indeed other languages have different names¹.

Despite the apparent differences in human languages, all languages have things in common; they would also share certain common characteristics. In any human language there are ten basic characteristics that can be anticipated. i. A language is composed of meaningful sounds. ii. A language will choose from the potential voices to meaningful sounds. iii. The languages will have both consonants and vowels. iv. The language will have a way of making statements, questions, commands and exclamations. v. The language will have a way of making negative statements. vi. Some languages are not written. vii. A language will have a way of indicating case relationships between nouns and verbs. viii. A language will have a way to indicate tense and aspect to the verb. ix. A language will have rules of deletions and rules of moving some parts of the sentence. x. A language will have a way to combine smaller sentences into large ones Cipollone¹.

English is used now as an international language to interact and a medium for people with different languages background to interact with each other. Researchers and scientists need to have professional skills in English language, if they desire to pave their way in the future, particularly the writing skill, because it is the medium of communication and scientific publication all over the world. Students in countries where English is not spoken in the surroundings, suffer the most from writing skills, because it requires the mastery of other skills which are the receptive skills reading and listening and the productive skill speaking.

In Sudan which is a developed country, the education system emphasizes writing to perform examinations. Students goal is to pass examination seeking higher marks and a bright future, so they have to be competent in writing skills, because the education system, rely only on writing tests and grades.

Composing in English language, is not an easy task, it requires the knowledge of arranging and organizing patterns of syntactic or lexical constrains beyond ideas and context, as expresses that “composing means expressing ideas, conveying meaning, composing means thinking” the present research paper investigates the role of lecturers in reinforce these devices during the course of teaching by the recursive use of them. Hence the students will be motivated to communicate with these devices. This paper relies on notion of cohesion Halliday and Hassan². They have shed light on the cohesive relations when they wrote a whole book on this issue. These devices make writing light and create texture which is considered as a distinctive property of any well written text.

Statement of the problem: EFL students in universities who have spent eleven years in using English language in schools

and then universities, and have received different courses in receptive and productive skills, they also had ample time to be exposed to practice and formal teaching. So they are supposed to explore advanced competence in writing. These courses should promote their composing ability and make their writing organized and well tied. Cohesive relations like reference, ellipses, substitutions, conjunctions and lexical cohesion, make following the text smooth and fix sentences to each other in a logical meaningful way. So the study will demonstrate the use and lack of use of cohesive devices by lecturers in the course of lectures, and how this procedure can help students in writing a well coherent piece of writing.

Objective of the study: i. To investigate the lecturers' role in using cohesive devices during the course of the lectures. ii. To identify the most types of cohesive devices used by lecturers. iii. To suggest steps to help students to use cohesive devices so as to make their Writing coherent and well tided.

Review of literature: Cohesion was first suggested by Roman Jakobson³ where he studied cohesion in poetry. He defined the concept of cohesion by relating it to the poetic function.

Cohesion was also studied in other genres Halliday and Hassan². For example, studied grammatical cohesion in spoken and written English providing some examples from Alice in Wonderland. They defined cohesion as a property that makes the text hangs together. Cohesion is achieved by grammatical, lexical or phonological factors. "Cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another". While cohesive devices in a text or language are, "the tools, means words that are used in sentences as the link between one part and other parts of sentences in the text" McCarthy⁴ (1985). In other words, cohesive devices are used to connect and tie aspects of text together.

Also described cohesion as part of the system of the language Halliday and Hassan². From this reality they identified two types of cohesion: the first is grammatical cohesion and the other is lexical cohesion. The form of presupposition may point to the previous item in the preceding point. These two types of reference which occur inside the text are termed also by them as endophoric. The relation may take its presupposition from the situation or environment; in this case it is called exphoric.

There is a problem with the use of cohesion relations said Nuttall⁵:

*"They are straight forward that their difficulty
Overlooked and it is only when the students
Encounter problem the student thinks them
Worth attending to"*

The relation between cohesion and coherence: Cohesion and coherence are closely related qualities of written texts, but they are not synonymous. Some linguists consider coherence as a property that result from the cohesive elements which are

presented in the written text Halliday and Hassan². Other linguists think that cohesion is based on grammatical and lexical relationships while coherence is based on semantic relations Connor⁶.

The relation between cohesion and coherence is also discussed as "The quality enabling the reader to sense a flow of meaning as the result of organizing a paragraph according to some model of development" Fahnestock⁷. Coherence on the other hand, results from using a suitable transition to show the semantic relations that hold between sentences. These relations include sequence which is used to relate two sentences chronologically. It also involves exemplification, restatement, similarity and addition. Coherence is viewed as the property which leads to understand the text; it includes the reader's knowledge of the context of situation and the world Witte and Figley⁸. The same view of coherence is held by both Carrel⁹, and Bamberge¹⁰. For Carrel⁹, coherence creates cohesion and develops it in the text. Bamberge¹⁰ supports this view maintaining that coherence is both global and local.

Coherence and cohesion are two of several standards of textuality which are required so that the text can be defined as a communicative occurrence De Beaurande and Dressler¹¹. They relate coherence to the ways in which the component of the concepts and relations are relevant to the reader. Cohesion is, however, concerned with ways in which the components of the surface texts are connected within a sequence. The term texture is used to refer to coherence, they state that "The concept of texture is entirely appropriate to express the property of 'being a text' Halliday and Hassan². A text has a texture, and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text. It derives this texture from the fact that it functions as a unity with respect to its environment" According to this definition, coherence is considered to be a semantic property that results from texts cohesion.

The theory of cohesion: Regarding recent models of cohesion, the first comprehensive landmark on cohesion is the model proposed by Halliday and Hassan². This model contains a detailed presentation of the linguistic devices that are implemented to achieve cohesion. The types of cohesive devices are classified into four types. Cohesion occurs whenever, "the interpretation of any item in the discourse requires making reference to other item in that discourse" according to Halliday and Hassan².

Inter-sentential ties are not restricted by typical constrain governing the sentence, consequently, cohesion occurs among "elements that are un-structurally unrelated to one another..... through the dependence of one on the other for its interpretation". Cohesion is defined as "A potential for relating one element in the text to another, whenever they are without any implication that everything in the text has some part in it" Halliday and Hassan².

Cohesion relations are then classified into three kinds, each reflecting some aspects of relatedness: i. Relatedness of form: where identify of two cohesive ties is both structural and semantics. ii. Relatedness of reference: where an exact identifies of reference between the presupposing cohesive element and the presupposed one is assumed. iii. Relatedness in the semantic connection, where often an identical, similar or contrastive lexical item occurs.

Cohesive Ties: A central concept in this theory is the cohesive tie which is defined as an item that links two sentences. Later, they defined a cohesive tie as a link between two sentences that share some semantic relations. These semantic relations can be co-preferentiality, identical reference, or co-classification to provide two taxonomies for classifying the cohesive devices for ties Halliday and Hassan². The first one is a functional taxonomy and the second classifies cohesive ties according to the amount of the text-spanned by presupposing and presupposed elements according to distance.

Cohesive ties are of two types: grammatical and lexical. The grammatical ones are reference, ellipses and substitution relations. Reiteration and collocation on the other hand are lexical, conjunctions is the board line between the two Halliday and Hassan².

The Methodology of the Study: This study will employ the qualitative approach. The tool of the study is "Observation". The researcher is going to attend different eight lectures, in different classes to observe if the lecturers use in the course of the lecture any type of cohesive devices, because students should be accustomed to hear and listen these devices naturally, so they can apply them in their writings.

Results

Observation is the tool for this study. To perform this task the researcher has to attend eight lectures in different subjects other than grammar or writing in the English department Neelain University. The main purpose is to see whether these lecturers use the semantic markers during the course of the lecture. The researcher has selected eight subjects from different classes, and attended these lectures in first, second, third and fourth year, to investigate whether the lecturers use the semantic markers during their lectures. To apply this errand, the researcher has to ask permission from the lecturer without showing the purpose behind it, so as to let the lecturer feel free to perform naturally.

Lecture One "phonetics": The topic of this lecture was teaching lateral and gliding consonants, /L/, /w/, /j/, /r/.

The lecture used many conjunctions and reference relations. The most dominant conjunctions used were the simple addition conjunction "and" and the temporal conjunction "then". He also used the conjunctions: "according to" "for instance" and "thus", and he used the pronouns, "that, these, he, she, they" for

referring back to something previously mentioned. In addition he used some lexical cohesive relations like. Synonym and repetition of key terms or phrases, there was a total absence of other devices like; substitution and ellipsis.

Lecture Two "Phonology": This lecture was about weak forms or function words. The lecturer has used the familiar conjunctions and reference as; and, so, it, of course, also, for, this. In this lecture there was no mention to many reference relations a total absence of lexical cohesion, ellipsis and substitution.

Lecture Three "Listening": This lecture was performed by a native speaker. It was demonstrated in a tap, the topic is about a short conversation between a man and a stranger, who asked the man many questions to show her how to get to different locations in town. The lecturer in the course of explaining the topic, used different and many conjunctions and reference relations, in addition to lexical cohesive relations like; repetition of key words, synonym, hyponym, she also used the nominal and verbal substitution; one, ones, do, be, have. Moreover she used ellipsis forms.

Lecture Four "African literature": This lecture was based on culture and identity with reference to Achebee's novel "Things Fall Apart". In the course of explaining the topic, the lecturer used different pronouns reference relation with a little mention to lexical cohesion, ellipsis and conjunctions.

Lecture Five "Speaking": It is the second lecture held by a native speaker, because these lectures "listening and speaking", are often performed by native speakers. The nature of this lecture is a debate about the argumentative topic "is it better for women to stay at home or to go to work?" In the introduction stage the lecturer demonstrated the historical background of the topic, she used many cohesive and semantic markers; reference, conjunctions, lexical cohesive in addition to ellipsis and substitution.

Lecture Six "Syntax": The topic explained in this lecture was the approaches in linguistics which are: i. Latin influence school. ii. Transformational grammar. iii. Structuralism.

The lecturer used many conjunctions and reference relations like; "and", "else", "however", "but", "for", "because", the personal pronouns and some demonstratives elements. The other semantic makers were absent from the lecture except some forms of lexical cohesion relations, for example; a repetition of some key words, substitution and ellipsis are totally absent.

Lecture Seven "TEFL": TEFL lectures "fourth year" the abbreviation means teaching English as a foreign language. There are certain methods and approaches the students study them. In this lecture, the lecturer explained the communicative approach. He used many conjunctions and reference relations like; pronouns and demonstratives. The pronouns used were

and, so, but, for, because, with repetition of key terms, there is no mention to substitution or ellipsis forms.

Lecture Eight “Reading Skills”: The researcher attended this lecture at first year class. The topic was about “The Media”, the comprehension reading passage was “How to read a newspaper”. The lecturer gave a brief introduction about the topic and discussed some photos in the lesson with the students. Doing so, he used many cohesive relations; the familiar conjunctions and, so, because, else, however...., and some reference relations like pronouns and demonstratives, some lexical items included repetition of the same word or phrase, but he didn’t use any kind of substitution or ellipsis.

Table-1
The results of the observation

Type of lecture	Usage of				
	Reference	Substitution	Ellipses	Lexical cohesion	conjunctions
Phonetics	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Phonology	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
African lit	✓	X	X	X	✓
Speaking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Syntax	✓	X	X	✓	✓
TEFL	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Reading	✓	X	X	✓	✓

Findings

From the table above, it seems that the most used devices are conjunctions and reference and the least used devices are ellipsis and substitution.

Recommendations and suggestions: i. Teachers ought to understand that EFL learners should be exposed to listen to more devices during the course of lectures. ii. The writings of EFL learners are loose and unconnected with each other; this issue has been a challenge to EFL teachers and researchers as well. iii. EFL teachers should employ different techniques for feedback and follow up. iv. The teachers should design activities that improve the student’s writings. v. Teachers should adopt different strategies for teaching and feedback techniques. The strategy of analyzing texts includes many activities and exercises which could be done individually or in groups.

Conclusion

This study investigates the lecturer’s role in reinforcing cohesive devices during their teaching process. It contains the introduction, in which there is an overview about language and its function. The statement of the problem states the problem of the study, then the objectives of the study which introduces the benefits and goals of the study. The literature reviews the writers and authors who wrote about the subject, then the results and the findings of the study.

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