

# **An analysis of cohesive devices in reading texts in English 11 / Hoàng Trà My**

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1. Rationale**

Among all skills which students need to master in English, reading is considered to be very important because it helps students to get materials for other skills. To learn reading well, it is necessary for students to comprehend sufficient language base, one of which is the cohesion in the text. Because of the importance of cohesion in comprehending a text, this small study on discourse analysis of cohesive devices is decided to be carried out.

### **2. Aims of the Study: The study aims:**

- to describe and analyze lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in the new English textbook 11;
- to give some suggestions for teaching reading skill for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.

In order to achieve the aims stated, the study is meant to find out the answers to the two following research questions:

1. What are the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices used in reading texts in English textbook 11?
2. How can the findings help English teachers and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students to improve reading skill?

### **3. Scope of the Study**

Because of the lack of time and the paper size, it is unable for all the issues of discourse to be analyzed. The study focuses on the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in reading texts in the new English textbook 11.

### **4. Significance of the Study**

The study contributes to verifying the correctness and significance related to linguistic theories in discourse analysis by analyzing discourse in one specific textbook. In addition, the practical significance of the study is to help 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers in reading skill by applying the knowledge of cohesion.

### **5. Methods of the Study: *descriptive, statistical and analytical* methods**

### **6. Design of the Study**

The minor thesis consists of three parts:

- Part 1 is The Introduction
- Part 2 is The Development which is divided into three chapters: Literature Review, Methodology and Major Findings and Discussions
- Part 3 is The Conclusion

## **PART 2: DEVELOPMENT**

### **CHAPTER 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1. Discourse and Discourse Analysis**

##### **1.1. The Concept of Discourse**

Discourse is defined in various ways by different scholars and authors, however, the definition given by Halliday and Hasan (1976) is regarded as the simplest and the clearest to follow. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 38) state that discourse is language that is functional. It means that discourse is “language in use”.

##### **1.2. Text and Discourse**

In the view of Halliday and Hasan (1976: 23), “text” is employed to refer to “discourse”; they see “text” as a “semantic unit” characterized by cohesion. Sharing the same ideas, Brown & Yule (1983) support that text is the representation of discourse and the verbal record of a communicative act. In other words, they all view the notion of text is the representation of discourse, text is the form of discourse and they have a close relationship.

##### **1.3. Spoken and Written Discourse**

Spoken and written language can be also distinguished by different functions. According to Brown and Yule (1983: 13), the function of spoken language is mainly to establish and maintain human relationship whereas written language has functions to store information from time and space and to permit words and sentences to be examined out of their original contexts.

##### **1.4. Discourse Analysis**

In the view of Brown and Yule (1983: viii), discourse analysis is concerned with a broad range of activities including many disciplines from sociolinguistics, philosophical linguistics to computational linguistics. To be clearer, Brown and Yule (1983: 1) write, “the analysis of discourse is, necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purposes of functions which these forms are designed to serve human affairs”.

##### **1.5. Context in Discourse Analysis**

According to Nunan, D (1993: 7), context is the situation in which discourse is embedded. Context may be understood as all factors and elements that are non-linguistic and textual which affect spoken or written communication interaction.. However, in the view of Malinowski (1923) and Halliday M.A.K (1985: 52) context is divided as “context of situation” and “context of culture”.

## 1.6. Register and Genre in Discourse Analysis

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976: 41), register is language variety according to use. Register is featured by “**field**”, “**tenor**” and “**mode**”.

The concept of genre is defined in terms of culture context. Eggins (1994: 32) defines genre as follow:

Genre, or context of culture, can be seen as more abstract, more general – we can recognize a particular genre if we are not sure exactly what the situational context is. Genre, then, can be thought of as the general framework that gives purpose to interactions of particular types, adaptable to the many specific contexts of situation that they get used in.

## 2. Cohesion

### 2.1. The Concept of Cohesion

Cohesion is defined in the relation with text. It is concerned with the grammatical and lexical relationship among different factors in a text.

### 2.2. Cohesion vs. Coherence

Cohesion is a formal network which connects or links many parts of a text together by grammar or words. Meanwhile, coherence is the connections which bring interpretation of linguistic messages.

### 2.3. Aspects of Cohesion

#### 2.3.1. Topical Cohesion

Topic is concerned with the description of sentence structure which contains the topic or theme and the comment or rheme.

#### 2.3.2. Logical Cohesion

Hoa, N (2000: 28) indicates that “logical cohesive devices are also powerful sentence connectors. They demonstrate the logical relationships holding between sentences, thus creating or expressing cohesion.” Cohesive devices can be divided into some types as: *And, Enumeration, Addition, Transition, Summation, Apposition, Result, Inference, Reformulation or replacement, Contrast, Concession, and Comparison.*

### 2.4. Types of Cohesion

#### 2.4.1. Grammatical Cohesion

##### 2.4.1.1. Reference

In the view of Halliday and Hasan (1976: 32), reference is a semantic relation and “since the relationship is on the semantic level, the reference item is in no way constrain to match the grammatical class of the item it refers to”. The two scholars also distinguish reference into

three types: anaphoric, cataphoric and exophoric. Reference items in English include three types: *personal reference*, *demonstrative reference* and *comparative reference*.

#### **2.4.1.2. Substitution**

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 89) divides substitution into three main types namely: *nominal*, *verbal* and *clausal substitution*.

#### **2.4.1.3. Ellipsis**

In Halliday and Hasan's point of view (1976: 142), ellipsis is "the omission of certain elements from a sentence, allowed by context"

#### **2.4.1.4. Conjunction**

Halliday and Hasan (1976: 242-243) divide conjunction into four types including *additive*, *adversative*, *casual* and *temporal*.

### **2.4.2. Lexical cohesion**

#### **2.4.2.1. Reiteration**

Reiteration is regarded as a significant feature of textuality. Reiteration can be divided into five subtypes, namely *repetition*, *synonym or near-synonym*, *super-ordinate* and *general words*.

#### **2.4.2.2. Collocation**

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976) "word combination" or "word co-occurrence" is known as *collocation* which brings a particular sense or meaning. Collocation has two subtypes: *grammatical collocation* and *lexical collocation*. The first one usually contains a lexical content word and a grammar function word. There are four main types of grammatical collocation: **V + Prep**, **Adj + Prep**, **N + Prep**, **Prep + N**. The second one is restricted by word pairs. Lexical collocation do not contain preposition but consist of various combinations of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. They can be seen in following common patterns: **Adj + N**, **Quant + N**, **V + N**, **N + V**, **V + Adv**, **V + Adj**, **V + V**, **Adv + Adj**, **N + N**.

## **CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY**

### **1. An Overview of the English Textbook 11**

#### **1.1. The Role of the English Textbook in English Language Teaching**

English textbooks give primary supplements to teachers to plan their lessons appropriately and perfectly.

#### **1.2. Description of the English Textbook 11**

English 11, including sixteen units for two semesters, follows the theme-based approach and is developed on six broad themes, that is, *You and me*, *Education*, *Community*, *Nature and Environment*, *Recreation* and *People and Places*. Each theme, in its turn, is broken into subthemes or topics which are used as titles for sixteen units in English 11.

### **2. Research Methodology**

#### **2. 1. Materials for Analysis**

All materials used for analyzing in this study are extracted from sixteen reading texts in English 11.

#### **2.2. Methods of the Study**

This study aims at investigating the frequency of the use of cohesive devices in reading texts in English 11 to obtain the data for the study, some steps below are followed.

Steps 1: Determine the Research Topic

Step 2: Determine and Define the Research Questions

Step 3: Build the framework for the study

Step 4: Collect the Data

Step 5: Analyze the Data

Step 6: Give Conclusions and Suggestions for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Students in Learning Reading

#### **2.3. Data Collection Procedures**

After deciding on the research topic, research questions and building the study framework, the researcher has taken time to collect the data. The methods of *descriptive* and *statistical* have been used to gather the data.

#### **2.4. Data Analysis Procedures**

*Analytical method* has been restored to when dealing with data.

## CHAPTER 3: MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Grammatical Cohesion

#### 1.1. Reference

Reference	Number of items	Percentage	Total
Anaphoric	422	70.9	595
Cataphoric	53	8.9	
Exophoric	120	20.2	

**Table 1: The percentage of different types of reference**

#### 1.1.1. Anaphoric Reference

The total pattern of markers takes up 241 items. All seven patterns of markers appearing in anaphoric reference are *definite article*, *personal pronoun*, *demonstrative pronoun*, *comparative adverb*, *comparative adjective* and *demonstrative adverb*. The table below shows the data of seven patterns in 16 reading passages in the English 11.

Anaphoric reference	Number of items	%	Total
Definite article	126	29.9	422
Personal pronoun	171	40.5	
Demonstrative pronoun	27	6.4	
Comparative adjective	7	1.7	
Personal determiner	86	20.4	
Comparative adverb	5	1.2	
Demonstrative adverb	0	0.0	

**Table 2: The percentage of different types of reference words for anaphoric ties**

#### 1.1.2. Cataphoric Reference

Cataphoric reference	Number of items	%	Total
Definite article	35	66	53
Personal pronoun	4	7.5	
Demonstrative pronoun	4	7.5	
Comparative adjective	3	5.7	
Personal determiner	1	1.9	
Comparative adverb	3	5.7	
Demonstrative adverb	3	5.7	

**Table 3: The percentage of different types of reference words for cataphoric ties**

Cataphoric reference accounts for the smallest part of reference, however, it is vital to vary the direction of reference and create the cohesion of the text. Surprisingly, the definite article takes up the largest ties with 35 ties accounting for 66%.

### 1.1.3. Exophoric Reference

Exophoric reference	Number of items	%	Total
Definite article	92	76.7	120
Personal pronouns	14	11.7	
Demonstrative pronouns	1	0.8	
Comparative adjective	7	5.8	
Personal determiner	5	4.2	
Comparative adverb	0	0.0	
Demonstrative adverb	1	0.8	

**Table 4: The percentage of different types of reference words for exophoric ties**

Exophoric reference refers to objects or events which are out of language and it can be understood by all people without relation to the meaning of the text. For this reason, it does not have much value in connecting the text together.

### 1.2. Substitution

Type of substitution	Number of items	%	Total
Nominal	15	93.8	16
Verbal	0	0.0	
Clausal	1	6.2	

**Table 5: The percentage of substitution in English 11**

Substitution occupies a very low frequency of occurrence. There are only 16 ties of substitution in 16 reading texts. Surprisingly, nominal substitution takes up 15 ties, representing for 93.8% of total.

### 1.3. Ellipsis

Sixteen reading passages in English 11 consist of 29 ellipsis items including all three classes namely *nominal*, *verbal* and *clausal*, which are presented in the table below:

Type of ellipsis	Number of items	%	Total
Nominal	18	62.1	29
Verbal	6	20.7	
Clausal	5	17.2	

**Table 6: The percentage of ellipsis in English 11**



Firstly, in sixteen reading texts, nominal ellipsis occupies the largest percentage with eighteen items, representing for 62.1%. Secondly, verbal ellipsis takes up only six items, accounting for 20.7%. These six items occur in four units: 5, 6, 7 and 16. Lastly, clausal ellipsis accounts for the smallest number with five items for 17.2%. Five elliptical items appear in unit 1, 2 and 3.

#### 1.4. Conjunction

Type of conjunction	Number of items	%	Total
Additive	183	63.3	289
Temporal	66	22.8	
Causal	13	4.5	
Adversative	27	9.4	

**Table 7: The percentage of conjunction in English 11**

At the first look, it can be seen that additive conjunction occupies the biggest percentage of the total. Additive conjunction takes up 183 items, accounting for 63.3%. Temporal conjunction, which is used in rather high percentage, comes second with 66 items, accounting for 22.8% of total. Adversative conjunction comes third with 27 items, representing for 9.4%. Causal conjunction presents the lowest frequency of use with only 13 items, representing for 4.5%. Causal conjunction stands at the lowest rank of conjunction with only 4.5%.

## 2. Lexical Cohesion

### 2.1. Reiteration

Reiteration	Number of items	Percentage	Total
Repetition	709	68.5	1035
Synonym/ near-synonym	111	10.7	
Super-ordinate	188	18.2	
General word	27	2.6	

**Table 8: The percentage of reiteration in English 11**

As shown in the table, among the four types of reiteration, repetition is the most frequently-used device with the percentage of up to 68.5%. Super-ordinate ranking second takes up 18.2%. Synonyms or near-synonym comes third with 10.7%. General word accounts for the smallest portion of total with only 2.6%.

### 2.2. Collocation

Collocation is divided into two types: grammatical and lexical collocation. Basing on the statistics from the analysis, the total of collocation patterns in sixteen reading passages in

English textbook 11 are 421 ties. Lexical collocation takes up 361 items, accounting for 85.7% while grammatical collocation occupies only 60 items, representing for 14.3%.

### 2.2.1. Lexical Collocation

There are 361 lexical cohesion items used in sixteen reading passages in English 11, equivalent to 85.7%. Lexical collocation can be analyzed basing on the data illustrated in the table below:

Types of collocation	Number of items	%	Total
Adj + N	121	33.5	361
V + N	91	25.2	
N + N	74	20.5	
Quant + N	48	13.3	
V + Adj	8	2.2	
Adv + Adj	2	0.6	
V + Adv	7	1.9	
V + V	1	0.3	
N + V	9	2.5	

**Table 9: The percentage of lexical collocation in English 11**

### 2.2.2. Grammatical Collocation

Grammatical collocation often consists of a lexical content word and a grammar function word. An overall picture of lexical collocation can be seen as follow:

Types of collocation	Number of items	%	Total
V + Prep	33	55	60
Prep + N	10	16.7	
Adj + Prep	15	25	
N + Prep	2	3.3	

**Table 10: The percentage of grammatical collocation in English 11**

## 3. Summary

According to statistics above, the gap between grammatical and lexical cohesion is very big. While grammatical cohesion makes up 39%, lexical cohesion occupies 61%. The imbalance between grammatical and lexical cohesion is due to the ways of word combination.

## **PART 3: CONCLUSIONS**

### **1. Conclusions**

Basing on all the statistics and analyses on the grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in sixteen reading passages above, the researcher comes to conclusions as follows:

Firstly, these texts are highly cohesive. This can be proved by the number of cohesive ties used in 16 reading texts. The total number of cohesion ties used in sixteen passages is 2385, so in a text, there are about 150 cohesion ties, accounting for a half of it in terms of word count. Secondly, the use of cohesion in one text is different from others. Thirdly, the use of lexical cohesive devices is much more than grammatical cohesive devices in sixteen reading passages. Fourthly, with respect to grammatical cohesive devices, reference, conjunction, substitution and ellipsis are seen in their most common features. In terms of reference, it accounts for the highest rate in all sixteen reading passages. In terms of conjunction, its use in sixteen reading passages is special because in each text, some typical types of conjunction are employed. In terms of substitution and ellipsis, they present for a very small percentage, this proves the simplicity of sixteen reading texts because the high frequent use of substitution and ellipsis can make the texts more difficult and complicated to understand and without the knowledge of substitution and ellipsis, students may misunderstand and misinterpret the text.

Fifthly, with respect to lexical cohesion, reiteration and collocation are seen in their most popular features. In terms of reiteration, repetition seems to be overused while a very small percentage of synonym/ near-synonym, antonym, super-ordinate and general word are employed in these sixteen reading texts. In terms of collocation, lexical collocation occupies more percentage than grammatical collocation because of different ways of combination.

### **2. Suggestions**

#### **2.1. Suggestions for English Teachers and Learners**

English teachers should provide students with knowledge of cohesion which is considered to be an effective means to help them in reading skill. Furthermore, English teachers are suggested to raise students' awareness of the importance of cohesive devices. English teachers can also take advantage of cohesion in teaching vocabulary. Finally, whenever students do the exercises related to cohesion knowledge, teachers should remind them. By this way, students can apply cohesion in dealing with the exercises of the same types.

Basing on the statistics given above, some significant features of reading texts in English 11 are drawn out and some suggestions for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students are proposed. Firstly, reference is used in a very high rate in these reading passages, and anaphoric should be paid more

attention because of its value in connecting texts together. Secondly, substitution and ellipsis are used in small percentages in these reading texts. In terms of substitution, teachers had better remind students when dealing with unit 4 and unit 13. Because ellipsis occurs many times in four units: unit 1, 5, 6 and 7, students are advised to think about them when learning these units. Thirdly, conjunction is used to organize the structure of the reading passages. In reading process, 11<sup>th</sup> grade students should consider the ways the texts are written in. For example, in unit 1 and 7 all the ideas are constructed by listing. Lastly, in reiteration cohesion, synonym or near-synonym is regarded as the most important issue to 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. English teachers can apply synonym and super-ordinate to teach new words.

## **2.2. Suggested Cohesion Exercises for English Teachers and Learners**

Cohesive devices can be seen in various forms of reading exercises or reading tasks. Two most significant forms of reading tasks for cohesion are *gap-filling* and *true-false*. Besides gap-filling and true – false exercises, there are also various forms of exercises. The first one is multiple-choice. Secondly, finding equivalents exercises are also employed to treat with synonym and antonym words. The last one is matching exercise, which designed to solve with vocabulary.

## **3. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies**

Firstly, because there is no content-focus in these reading texts, the results of this research can not actually show the most typical features of the reading texts as a whole, but in themes or in units only. Secondly, due to the limitation of the paper size, on discussing each type of cohesion, only some examples from one or two units are proposed. Lastly, applications of cohesion in other skills such as speaking, listening, writing have not been stated.

Due to the constraint in time, all the issues of the related to the study cannot be covered. I do hope to develop this topic with a larger range of topic as follow:

- The study of grammatical cohesive devices in English 10, 11 and 12.
- The study of lexical cohesive devices in English 10, 11 and 12.
- The study of cohesive devices in reading texts in English 10, 11 and 12.