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Tên đề tài: A contrastive analysis of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices in inaugural speeches by the U.S president Barack Obama and Vietnamese former president Nguyen Minh Triet

(Liên kết ngữ nghĩa và ngữ pháp trong bài phát biểu nhậm chức của tổng thống Mỹ Barack Obama và cựu chủ tịch nước Việt Nam Nguyễn Minh Triết – So sánh đối chiếu)

Summary

English is one of the most important languages in communication. Nowadays, people all over the world learn English to communicate with each other, therefore, the language has become an international language. Because of the significance of English, Vietnamese learners try to find many ways to master the second language, such as through movies, stories, music and even pictures. Another good way that many learners choose is learning English through speeches made by famous people. However, there is a truth that Vietnamese learners of English often make a variety of mistakes and errors when using the target language. They often use the second language by putting words together to produce a sentence. As a result, the language is incoherent. It is necessary to use cohesive devices, especially in terms of vocabulary and grammar, which can cohere ideas in a context together to avoid the incoherence of texts. Thanks to these devices, which can help to make the language items connected, learners can use the second language as native speakers. In addition, no one has studied about cohesive devices in president Obama's speech. Barack Obama, who is the first color-skinned president of America, has a big influence on Americans' mind. For

above reasons, the author of this paper aims to focus on lexical and grammatical cohesive devices used in Obama's speech in comparison with ex-president Nguyen Minh Triet's speech. By contrastively analyzing of the two speeches, the paper is expected to aid learners of the second language to avoid making errors and use the language as natively as their mother tongue.

This thesis aims at giving a general theoretical background of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices. Moreover, it describes and analyzes lexical and grammatical cohesive devices used in two speeches made by two representatives in similar situational context but different cultural context to reveal similarities and differences. With the above purposes, the study intends to answer the following research questions: How are lexical and grammatical cohesive devices used in Obama's and Nguyen Minh Triet's inaugural speeches?; What are the similarities and differences between lexical and grammatical cohesive devices used in two inaugural speeches?

To answer two research questions of the study, firstly, a variety of materials related to cohesive devices, notably, lexical and grammatical cohesive devices, is read through and selected to build up a theoretical background for the research. Then, cohesive devices used in two speeches are collected and classified for description, analysis and statistics. Contrastive method is used to find out the similarities and differences of lexical and grammatical cohesive devices used in two speeches. The study tries to give a theoretical framework of discourse, discourse context, contrastive analysis and lexical and grammatical cohesion. Then, the analyses on grammatical cohesive devices – reference, substitution, ellipsis and conjunction – and lexical cohesive devices – reiteration and collocation – of two inaugural speeches have demystified their similarities and differences in using these devices to make texts coherent, airtight and unambiguous.

Firstly, grammatical cohesive devices in English and Vietnamese inaugural speeches are resulted as shown in the table below:

Grammatical cohesive devices	English speech	Vietnamese speech
Anaphoric reference	29.3%	25%
Cataphoric reference	3.7%	6.2%
Substitution	1.8%	0
Ellipsis	3.7%	0
Conjunction	61.5%	68.8%

The table shows the grammatical cohesive devices used in speeches made by U.S President Barack Obama and our ex-president Nguyen Minh Triet. In the English version, conjunction takes the highest position with 61.5%. Ranking in the second place is anaphoric reference with the rate of 29.3%. Cataphoric reference and ellipsis stand at the same rate of 3.7%. And the lowest rate at 1.8% is substitution. Similarly, in Vietnamese version, conjunction is in the top with 68.8%. After conjunction is anaphoric reference with 25% and cataphoric reference with 6.2%. We cannot find substitution and ellipsis in the Vietnamese speech.

It can be seen that in both speeches, the percentage of conjunction is the highest. Two authors use this type of grammatical cohesive devices as the most effective means to make their texts clear and coherent. In addition, English version in comparison with the Vietnamese one has more grammatical cohesive devices. This may be originated from the difference between the grammatical rules of two languages of two countries, where two speeches are delivered. In terms of lexical cohesive devices, the percentage of lexical cohesive devices found in speeches made by U.S President Barack Obama and our former President Nguyen Minh Triet is shown in the table below:

Lexical cohesive devices	English speech	Vietnamese speech
Repetition	27.8%	71.4%
Synonym	13%	0
Antonym	11%	0
Hyponym	27.8%	25%
Collocation	20.4%	3.6%

It can be easily seen from the table that the English speech is rich in lexical cohesive devices to create a clear, precise, unambiguous and coherent text while the Vietnamese version has a limited number of these lexical cohesive devices (5 versus 3). This cannot be understood that the English one is clearer, more precise, unambiguous and coherent than the Vietnamese one, but this difference manifests the particular characteristics of the languages used in speeches in English and Vietnamese.

More specifically, in Obama's speech, the highest proportion falls into repetition and hyponym with 27.8%. Thanks to the large number of repeated words and hyponyms, sentences and ideas are stucked together and the text becomes clearer and coherent. While, in Nguyen Minh Triet's speech, the highest one used is repetition at the rate of 71.4%. After it, hyponym ranks in the second place with 25%. So, in both speeches, repetition is considered as the most effective cohesion to create coherence and then comes to hyponym. In addition, while in the English speech, synonym counts for 13% and antonym counts for 11%, in the Vietnamese one, there is no synonym and antonym used. Another contrast is that the frequency of collocation in Barrack Obama's speech is much higher with the rate of 20.4% to make the text consistent. In comparison with the English version, Nguyen Minh Triet's writing holds 3.6% of this type of cohesive device.

So far, lexical cohesive devices used in both speeches of two heads of State have been investigated. These devices have great contributions to the creation of coherence in texts. Along with grammatical cohesive devices, lexical cohesive devices help to make texts precise and coherent. With the result of analyzing two speeches, it is clear to see that lexical cohesive devices are found more frequently in the English version than those in the Vietnamese one.

In short, both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices are found more often in the English inaugural speech than in the Vietnamese one. This may be the result of different language systems of two nations and the context of culture may be blamed for as well. As discussed in the beginning, two inaugural speeches are made in the same context of situation but different context of culture. The political institutions and ideology of two countries lead to the unsimilarities in using language items in general and cohesive devices to cohere texts together in particular. However, it is clear that both authors take full advantages of their language items to make their texts airtight, precise and coherent.

Within the scope of the study, the study can finally reveal the answers for some research questions raised at the very beginning of the paper. In terms of lexical cohesive devices, in both speeches of Barrack Obama and Nguyen Minh Triet, repetition and hyponym are the most effective means that help the texts coherent. And in terms of grammatical cohesive devices, conjunction is mostly used for the creation of clarity, precision and unambiguity for the texts. Although in the Vietnamese version, some grammatical and lexical cohesive devices are not found as in the English one, the text is also clear and coherent. This may be explained by the particular features of language use and characteristics of this type of writing in Vietnamese.

Contrastive analysis is really an effective means to figure out the different and similar uses of cohesive devices in two texts or two speeches, which are representatives of two languages from two different countries. Therefore, the author of this thesis does hope that the result of the study will be useful for

learning writing in general and writing speeches in specific to be more natural and coherent.

By analyzing grammatical and lexical cohesion in two speeches of two heads of State, the study aims at giving some suggestions for teachers and learners of the second language. It can be seen from the study that authors of two inaugural speeches use cohesion flexibly to make their texts clear, precise, coherent and persuasive as well. By comprehending the result of this study, learners of second language can understand the similarities and differences of cohesion used in two languages. Accordingly, they can easily write speeches or any other texts in English accurately and naturally without ‘translating’ their ideas into English. For example, in English version, lexical cohesive devices such as antonym and synonym are often used while these two devices are rarely used or even unused in Vietnamese version. Vietnamese learners of English should take a notice of this difference when writing texts, especially speeches, to make their writings clear, airtight and coherent.

When teaching writing for students of English, teachers should remind their students of cohesive devices, which create coherent texts, by giving them authentic materials and let them explore cohesive devices used in those materials. In addition, teachers should also provide their students a wide variety of vocabularies that are useful. Moreover, the choice of grammatical means should be taken much notice of. Overall, teachers of English should also make their student clear about similar and different uses of grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in two languages to avoid ambiguousness in their writing. On the other hand, students should study the use of cohesive devices and appropriately use these devices in their writings to make them clear, precise, airtight and unambiguous.

For the time constraint and the scope of study, the thesis shows some limitations. Firstly, it shows mostly English grammatical rules without presenting the Vietnamese ones. Therefore, audiences may not contrast these two

grammatical rules properly in general and in two inaugural speeches in specific. Secondly, it only investigates grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in two specific contexts; as a result, some implications on writing are not presented prominently and naturally. And that may make the research shortcoming.