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A Study on Reference as Cohesive Device in Essays Written by the Fourth Semester Students of the English Study Program Universitas Riau

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at (1) finding the types of reference as cohesive device in essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau, and (2) calculating the frequency of reference used in essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau. Documentation such as written texts was the main technique of collecting the required data. The data were analyzed by using theories from Halliday and Hassan (2013) about references as cohesive devices in the essays written by the students and by giving the percentage on the use of references. The research findings showed that all the types of reference as cohesive devices were used in the essays written by the fourth semester students with the total number of 954 devices. The most frequent reference cohesive devices used by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau was personal reference with the percentage of 53.3% followed by demonstrative reference with the percentage of 45.8% and comparative reference with the percentage 0.9%. It could be concluded that Personal reference was the most frequently used because it may refer not only to a particular person or object, but also to any identifiable person.

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1. Introduction

Writing has a significant purpose as the main tool in learning English and can be assumed the most essential for a successful study especially for students who are taking writing 3 (three) subject at Universitas Riau. Writing is a highly complex process involving a host of advanced skill that includes critical thinking and

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logical development of ideas. It requires the students to be aware of the properties of English texts. Hasan (2017) stated that in writing there is a one-way communication process where the writer sends information to the reader and he or she may not get the reply to what he or she has written. Another problem that may be confronted by English learners in writing is ease and comfort in expressing ideas which are linked with coherence and cohesion (Hasan et al., 2017).

One kind of writing that students learn at university is how to write a good essay since the students are expected to be able to write an academic writing. Oshima and Hogue (2006) state that an essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long instead of just one or two paragraphs. It consists of several paragraphs with one topic that supports each other.

According to Halliday (2010) a paragraph that uses cohesion must be a good writing. Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning that exist within the text which is expressed through the grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, Halliday (2013) states that cohesion is the range of grammatical and lexical possibilities that exist for linking an element of language with what has gone before or what follows in a text: this linking is achieved through relations in meaning that exist within and across sentences. Cohesion is used to be connected logically and linguistically to form a whole in paragraph. In writing an essay, it is required to use connections that involve the elements both within clause and beyond which can make the paragraph flow smoothly (Halliday and Hasan, 2013).

Concerning the explanation above, it can be concluded that all sentences in an essay must be linked with the right use of cohesive devices in order to make the paragraph meaningful and help the readers to understand the writing content. According to Yule (2010), cohesion helps the readers to make sense of what the readers read. It is used to hold a text together and give it meaning. As stated by Halliday (2013) that cohesion refers to relations of meaning that exist within text. In other words, if there is no cohesion within a text, it will be meaningless and difficult to understand. In addition, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) state that cohesion is one of the important features of well-written text that should be considered in writing a text.

Halliday (2013) reveals that cohesion refers to how words and various parts of a text are associated by the use of cohesive devices. Cohesive devices are highlighted as they connect one another to form a whole (Osisanwo, 2005). In other words, cohesive devices are words and phrase that link an idea in a text in order to create cohesion. Nunan (1993) states that the cohesive devices which are often used to connect ideas in writing are among others: references, substitutions and ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. In this study, the writer focused the research on the use of reference only based on the most common cohesive device used in the essays by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau. The term reference is traditionally used in semantics to define the relationship between a word and what it points to in the real world, Halliday (2013) views that reference refers to the relationship between two linguistic expressions.

The reason for choosing the fourth semester students as the participants of this study was based on assumption that they have knowledge in using cohesive devices. Meanwhile, essay was selected as the source of the data of the present study because it contains more than one paragraph and it is achieved in the writing with the use of reference. Furthermore, Alfaki (2015) stated that writing essay can helps students have a chance to adventure with the language, to go beyond what they have learned. Beside that, It plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions, and attitudes. In addition, essay is one of the main materials in Writing III subject for the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau.

The purpose of this research are to find out the types of reference as cohesive device and to calculate the frequency of reference used in essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau.

2. Methodology

This research is a descriptive research. Descriptive design is used because the data only described as what they are without giving any treatments. The reason for using qualitative method was that the problem in this research was investigated inductively. It means that the analysis is based on the facts that will be found and the hypothesis or theory is based on the data.

This research was conducted at Universitas Riau from April until July 2019. To determine the sample of this research, cluster sampling was used since the population had similar characteristics, and 36 students were taken out of 111 students. In collecting the data, the writer used documentation. Documentation is a verbal data such as journal, report, correspondence, and another written text (Arikunto, 2006). In this research, the documentation is the essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau. The writer asked the students to write an essay with one topic selected on a piece of paper based on the topics that were given to the students. In order to identify and classify the references that appeared in the essays, the writer was used theories from Halliday and Hassan, and then for calculating the frequency of reference devices the writer was used formula below:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

P= Percentage of the presence of certain type of reference devices.

F= the frequency of the presence of certain type of reference devices.

N= total number of all reference devices.

3. Results and Discussion

After the data were collected, the researcher found large amount of data to be presented. The following table 1 shows the recapitulation of the reference used by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau.

Table 1. The Use of Recapitulation of the Reference

Types of Reference	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Personal Reference	508	53.3%
Demonstrative Reference	437	45,8%
Comparative Reference	9	0.9%
Total	954	100%

The above table shows that personal reference is the most frequent cohesive devices used by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau with the percentage 53.3%, and then it is followed by demonstrative reference with the percentage 45.8%, and comparative reference 0.9%.

Personal Reference

In classifying the data as Personal Reference, the writer used the types of cohesion marker. Personal reference is divided into four classes of personal pronouns, possessive determiners, possessive pronouns, and reflexive pronouns. This system of reference is known as “person” and in traditionally recognized by “*first person*”, “*second person*”, and “*third person*” with the number category of “*singular*” and “*plural*”.

In this part, the writer collected some personal references in the essays to be analyzed and described below:

Student 1, Paragraph 1

In modern life, social media is developing fast. It's used by many people all over the world. Social media is very popular among the young.

It is an instance of text reference whereas it differs in kind; the referent is not being taken up at its face-value but is being transmuted into a factor or a respect. It is a singular personal reference shows the third thing (non-human). On the data above, it is categorized as anaphora reference which the subject reference is within the text and refers back to the social media in the previous sentence.

As seen table 2 shows that the students used personal reference devices 508 times in total. Among the three types of personal reference, personal pronouns were used the most with 371 times, dominating 73.1% of the total usage of personal reference in the essays, followed by possessive pronouns with 137 times (26.9%) and 0% for possessive determiner. Further analysis of the personal references used

in the essays shows that the item it was used the most occurring 109 times within the total usage of reference devices used in the essays, meaning that 21.4 % personal references is allocated to the reference “it”. The device it differs from all other personals in that it may refer not only to a particular person or object, some entity that is encoded linguistically as a participant, a noun or nominal expression, but also to any identifiable portion of text (Hassan and Halliday, 2013). Based on the analysis of the essays, the use of personal reference device “it” is to avoid repetition and wordy in a text.

Table 2. The Use of Personal Reference.

Personal Reference	Cohesive devices	Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Personal Pronouns	I	29	5.7%	
	You	60	11.8%	
	He	3	0.6%	
	She	5	0.9%	
	It	109	21.4%	
	They	77	15.1%	
	We	47	9.2%	
	Us	14	2.7%	
	Him	3	0.5%	
	Her	3	0.5%	
	Them	21	4.1%	
	Possessive Pronouns	Their	47	9.2%
		Our	37	7.2%
Its		2	0.4%	
Your		35	7.0%	
My		6	1.1%	
Her		7	1.3%	
His		3	0.6%	
Total		508	100%	

Demonstrative reference

Demonstrative reference is essentially a form of verbal pointing. The writer identifies the referent by locating it on a scale of proximity. It refers to the location of a process in space or time. Demonstrative reference in the essays found 5 (five) devices; *the, that, this, these, and those*. The examples of reference in the essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program were shown as follows:

Student 6, Paragraph 1

In Korean drama, usually from reading **the** title we can already get a picture of how to tell **the** story from **the** drama.

Demonstrative reference used on the data above is *the* which categorized into neutral demonstrative. The referent is identifiable on extralinguistic grounds no matter grounda no matter what the situation. It may arise because the referent is the whole class or the individual considered as a representataive of the whole class (Hassan and Halliday, 2013:71). The reference *the* followed by the words *title*, and *story* which is used to refer to the Korean drama. *The* is categorized as

endophoric reference in term of the object referred to something that has mentioned within the text.

The following table 3 shows that the students used demonstrative reference devices 437 times in total. Among the three types of demonstrative reference occur two types only: selective nominal demonstrative and definite article. Definite article was used the most with 370 times, dominating 84.6% of the total usage of demonstrative reference in the essays, followed by selective nominal demonstrative with 67 times (15.4%). Demonstrative reference is attained by the use of proximity such as *this*, *that*, *those*, and *these*.

Table 3. The Use of Demonstrative Reference.

Demonstrative Reference	Cohesive Devices used	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Selective nominal demonstrative	This	40	9.2%
	That	7	1.6%
	These	16	3.7%
	Those	4	0.9%
Definite article	The	370	84.6%
Total		437	100%

Comparative reference

Comparative reference is meant by comparison that is simply in terms of likeness or unlikeness, or two things may be the same, similar or different. In the essays of the fourth semester students, comparative reference device only appears eight times (*equally*, *as...as*, and *than*). The cohesive device is shown in the following sentence.

Student 6, Paragraph 1

Korean drama has an interesting title, but actually Indonesian are **equally** interesting.

Equally in the sentence above is an example of anaphoric reference that refers back to noun phrase (an interesting title). The use of comparative reference in the sentence is to compare the interesting title of Korean drama and Indonesian drama.

Table 4 shows that the students used comparative reference devices 9 times in total. Between the two types of demonstrative reference occurs one type only: particular comparison. Particular comparison expresses comparability between things in respect of a particular property. The property in question may be a matter of quantity or of quality (Hassan and Halliday, 2013).

Table 4. The Use of Comparative Reference.

Comparative	Cohesive Devices	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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Reference	used		
Particular comparison	As...as	1	11.1%
	Than	7	77.8%
	Equally	1	11.1%
Total		9	100%

4. Conclusion

The findings of this research demonstrate all the types of reference (personal reference, demonstrative reference, and comparative reference) that can be found in the essays written by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau. Personal reference can be categorized as a reference with the reference markers (I, you, he, she, they, them, etc.) which is referring to the person used in the essays. Demonstrative reference can be categorized as a reference with the reference markers (the, this, that, these, and those) which is referring to the place or thing used in the essay. Comparative reference can be categorized as a reference with the reference markers (as and equally) which is referring to the likeness and similarity between two things used in the essays. According to the findings, the most frequent reference cohesive devices used by the fourth semester students of the English study program Universitas Riau was personal reference with the percentage of 53.3% since personal reference may refer not only to a particular person or object, but also to any identifiable person of text. In conclusion, the use of reference in the essays is to refer to someone or something outside or inside the text in order to avoid the repetition of noun, and misuse of cohesive devices that can affect the ideas of the writer that could not be express clearly and accurately.

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