

**THE USE OF COHESIVE DEVICES IN ASIAN ENGLISH AS FOREIGN  
LANGUAGE (EFL) JOURNAL**

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***Abstract***

*The study provides an empirical analysis on the use of cohesive devices in EFL asian journal written by non-native english researchers from asian countries. Data for the study were 20 journals collected from 4 asian efl journals. Halliday and Hassan seminal work of “Cohesion in English” provides a comprehensive taxonomy of cohesive devices and Dooley and Levinsohn monograf gives the thorough examples how to analyse cohesive devices in the text. Of 566 cohesive devices found in the samples, 204 (36%) were lexical cohesion and 174 (30.7%) were conjunctions which are relatively in balance of both usage in the journal. However, the use of repetition as a part of lexical cohesion dominates the whole lexical cohesion by 92% (189) which is interpreted as the overuse of cohesive device of this type.*

***Key Words:*** Cohesive Devices, EFL Journal, Overuse.

***Abstrak***

Studi ini menyajikan analisis empiris penggunaan alat-alat kohesi dalam jurnal EFL Asia yang ditulis oleh peneliti yang menggunakan bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Data untuk penelitian ini adalah 20 jurnal yang berasal dari 4 jurnal berbahasa Inggris. Buku karya Halliday & Hassan yaitu "Cohesion in English" menyajikan taksonomi alat-alat kohesi secara menyeluruh dan monograf Dooley & Levinsohn memberikan contoh detail bagaimana menganalisis perangkat kohesi dalam teks atau wacana. Dari 566 perangkat kohesi yang ditemukan dalam sampel, 202 (36%) adalah kohesi leksikal dan 174 (30,7%) adalah konjungsi atau kata sambung. Dari temuan tersebut disimpulkan bahwa penggunaan kedua jenis konjungsi tersebut relatif seimbang dalam jurnal. Namun, repetisi sebagai bagian dari kohesi leksikal mendominasi keseluruhan kohesi leksikal sebesar 92% (189) yang ditafsirkan sebagai penggunaan berlebihan perangkat kohesi dari jenis ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Alat-alat Kohesi, Jurnal EFL, Penggunaan Berlebihan.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

**A**n excellent scientific writing is a combination of several writing elements such as relevant content, use of original materials, content organization, cohesion and coherence, language accuracy, presentation, and mechanical precision of writing (Trzeciak, 2003). Of all the criteria, one of the important aspects is cohesion and coherence in writing (Karadeniz, 2017). The reason why it is important because cohesion and coherence determine the level of legibility and comprehension of the meaning of a text (Todorascu et al., 2017). As a result, the negligence or inappropriateness of their usage determine the quality of writing.

As a main subject of this study, cohesion, in particular, is one of the imperative traits to determine a person's writing skill level. Witte & Faigley (1981) states that the types and frequency of the use of cohesive devices reflect the creativity of writers in putting ideas and affect the writing style and its properties to the text they write as well. Related to previous studies of this field, the research conducted by Ahmed (2010) and Ferris (1994) found evidence of strong connection between cohesion and writing skill levels. Both studies proved that the mastery of

cohesive devices is significantly important for someone who struggles in writing.

The Research on cohesion itself has been done by some researchers like Carrell (1982) and Connor (1984) with their research objects are students or pre-university students' writing. In contrast, the research of cohesion in EFL journal written by researcher who deem English as a foreign language has not been properly studied so that there is a need for in-depth research on this subject. Given the research on cohesion in EFL journals, at least one can find what type of cohesive devices are most commonly used so that through these results it can be determined whether the particular type of cohesive device is overuse or underuse.

The concept of overuse itself refers to too frequent use of a language device that dominates a discourse. The idea is reinforced by Oshima & Hogue (1999) who state that the overuse in coordinating conjunctions causes text to appear boring, ineffective, and immature. This is proven by Rahman (2013) in his research that reveals the overuse of cohesion can lead to redundancy and difficulty in understanding the text itself. The study shows that as many as 60 non-native Oman

students do repetition and excessive references that make the text becomes non-cohesive.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the study of the balanced use of cohesive devices is necessary in journal. So as to whether there is overuse or imbalance of particular types of cohesive devices in them. In addition, the results obtained from this study can be a review material and reflection of particular cohesive devices that have tendency being overused.

## **II. THEORETICAL REVIEW**

In their seminal work “Cohesion in English”, Halliday & Hassan stated that the concept of cohesion is the relation of meaning in text, thus the interpretation of some meanings in the text dependent one to another, one presupposes the other. The more definitive interpretation of cohesion is given by Connor (1984). He defines cohesion as “the use of lexical-grammatical cohesive devices that connect sentences and other parts of text such as paragraphs, clauses, or phrases so that the text has meaning.” Therefore, without cohesion, it is certain that the semantic system cannot be activated.

As the linking tools in the text, indeed, cohesive devices has specific benefits in the text which, when appropriately applied, will

improve the quality of a writing (Bloor & Bloor, 1995). The first benefit includes supporting the creation of coherence in the text in which coherence itself is a unity of ideas in a text which have the quality of being logical and consistent. The second most noticeable benefit is the 'flowing' in the text caused by the use of cohesion (Poudel, 2018). The term 'flowing' can be interpreted as the impression of connectivity among sentences so the gap of idea between sentences does not occur. The last, the greatest benefit of cohesion in text is the formation of linking parts of the text that are structurally unrelated to being connected so as to have meaning that can be interpreted by the reader ( Halliday & Hasan, 1976).

Furthermore, according to Halliday & Hasan (1976) cohesion in the text is divided into two types; grammatical and lexical cohesion. The first is divided into four parts which are reference, ellipsis, substitution, and conjunction and the second is one of its kind. Grammatical cohesion itself relies on grammatical tools to achieve cohesive ties in the text and the application depends on the convention of grammar rules. While lexical cohesion is “*the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary*”. The term

'vocabulary' covers several lexical categorizations such as synonym, antonym, repetition of words, hyponim, and collocation. To comprehend the five types of cohesive devices altogether with their sub-types, the following paragraph present the discussion of the term.

Reference as a part of the grammatical cohesion uses pronoun and other demonstrative to refer to noun that come before or after the reference. It is divided into two types, exophora and endophora. Exophora is a reference that uses non-linguistic elements like human, animals, nature, and events so it is a situational reference which is out of the text (Prayitno, 2009 : 2). Look at the following example: *(a teenager plays the music aloud ) father: "stop doing that, I want to sleep. "* the word 'that' refers to out the text 'play music aloud'. As endophora is a textual reference which means the reference is within the text. Endophora itself is divided into two types, anaphora and cataphora. A reference is called as anaphora when the it is aforementioned as in the following example: *Tina, kamu harus rajin belajar! While cataphora is contrary, which refers to things to be mentioned like the following example: Kamu harus berangkat kerja. Ayolah Anton!*

Substitution literally means replacement and by definition means cohesive ties by using the replacement of language elements by other elements in a linguistic unit. This replacement is usually intended as a distinguishing element and as an element of the writing style. A functional substitution can also be used to describe a particular structure in a sentence. The following is a clear example of substitution use in a sentence: *Orang tua mana yang tega melihat anaknya sengsara, melilit-lilit menanggung derita.* The word 'sengsara' is replaced by the word 'derita' which has relatively equal meaning.

Next is ellipsis which can be interpreted as disappearance or integration. This process is the removal of words or language units such as phrases or sentences instead of repeating them. Ellipsis is also the replacement of the empty element that is the existing element but deliberately removed. Moreover the main purpose of ellipsis is to keep the words so the writing becomes concise, as the present example: *I have tasted many varieties of durian in my life, and this is the best ever.*

One of the most widely used and practical tools of cohesive devices is conjunction. As one of devices that offer

convenience in its use, conjunction is entitled to be treated as such. It is recorded more than 99 conjunctions (Rahman in Halliday&Hassan ,2017: 49) in English that can be used to conjoin clauses or phrases (inter-sentential) and sentences (intra-sentential) or paragraph (intra-paragraph). All these conjunctions can be categorized into four types semantic meaning: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. While grammatically, it is divided into four types namely coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, correlative conjunction, and adverbial conjunction. The first three conjunctions are used in inter-sentential clusters while adverbial conjunctions are used in intra-sentential clusters.

Lexical cohesion by definition is cohesive ties in discourse involving lexical elements which utilize lexicon to link the premises (Noted there are five lexical elements that can be used i.e. synonyms or antonyms, repetition, collocation and superordinate). Synonym itself is a word that semantically has a relatively equal meaning. Then antonyms are words or phrases that have relatively opposite meaning in some semantic components. Repetition, as the name suggest, is a cohesive device by means of repetition of

nouns or pronouns, adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to achieve coherence in discourse. The following example gives a clear view of lexical cohesion use: *Para suami begitu sibuk bekerja hanya dalam hari-hari tertentu. Sedangkan para istri sibuk bekerja hampir setiap hari tanpa mengenal libur.*

Hyponym is the last component of lexical cohesion that uses the superordinate of a word or phrase as a reference to generate cohesion in discourse. Hyponyms as a semantic cluster that includes the subordinate word in which it refers to it is rather rarely used as a cohesive device since its application is very dependent on the context of the sentence. It is shown in the following example: *I love all sorts of fruit, and durian is my favorite.*

### **III. METHOD OF RESEARCH**

This study applies a qualitative method as described by Denzin & Lincoln (2000) “qualitative researchers study of things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings of people bring to them. ” In addition, Dunne et. al. ( 2005) also stated that “the qualitative data produce view of the social setting which suggest categories or representations produced through research are

socially and historically located and subject to change.” From both views it can be inferred that qualitative method is a methodology that fits to research changing phenomena like social and language, observe them, and present in such a way that can be logically explained. The study takes 20 research papers samples from four international EFL journals in Asian region. They are [journal.teflin.org/index.php/journal](http://journal.teflin.org/index.php/journal) (Vol 28, No 2 (2017)), [ejournal.ukm.my/jpend](http://ejournal.ukm.my/jpend), [asianefljournal.com/11022/teachingarticles/2018/teachingarticle/culi.chula.ac.th/publicationonline/current\\_issue\\_p1.php?journal\\_id=65](http://asianefljournal.com/11022/teachingarticles/2018/teachingarticle/culi.chula.ac.th/publicationonline/current_issue_p1.php?journal_id=65). The four journals are from Indonesia, [journal.teflin.org](http://journal.teflin.org), managed by Malang State University, Malaysia, [ejournal.ukm.my](http://ejournal.ukm.my), administered by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, managed by Chulalongkorn University, and [asianefljournal.com](http://asianefljournal.com) administered independently by EFL teaching community in asian region. The writers of those sample journals are EFL speakers who comes from a few asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipine, Thailand, Iran, and China.

The analysis of the sample is limited in the introductory section of the journal which covers more or less than 500 words. The

limitation is intended to restrict the research on argumentative essay of the writer which contains the importance of the research. Whereby through argumentative order, the writer is forced to employ several lexical devices to make the logical connection of the premises which result of the objective of the research.

The analysis methodology is based on the identification of five fundamental taksonomis of cohesive devices which have been comprehensively discussed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). The discussion on this subject by Brown & Yule (1983), Cook (1989), and Renkema (1993) also enriches the discussion of cohesion in discourse and the means of identification.

As for practical analysis, cohesive devices identification is given by Dooley and Levinsohn (2001) in his monograph ‘Analysing Discourse’. In the cohesion section of their monograph, Dooley & Levinsohn (2001: 14) gives a clear example of how to analyze the devices in a text. The following example is taken from their monograph:

In Repetition, an entire expression (as in (11)), or at least a recognizable part of it (as in (12)), is repeated:

(11) **The Prime Minister** recorded her

thanks to the Foreign Secretary.

**The Prime Minister** was most eloquent.

(12) **Dr. E. C. R. Reeve** chaired the meeting. **Dr. Reeve** invited Mr. Phillips to report on the state of the gardens.

In Lexical Replacement, the forms in question differ, but the referent or denotation is the same:

(13) **Ro's daughter** is ill again. **The child** is hardly ever well.

(14) **Ro** said **she** would have to take Sophie to the doctor.

There are other kinds of Pro-Forms besides pronouns. Pro-verbs are one type, such as *do ... it* (Halliday & Hasan 1976:126):

(15) I told someone **to feed** the cat. Has **it** been done?

Halliday and Hasan (1976:88) use the term Substitution for a kind of partial identity of denotation: two things are of the same type, but are different instances (tokens) of that type:

(16) Jules has **a birthday** next month.

Elsbeth has **one** too.

The process of analyzing cohesive devices such as reference, substitution, and conjunction is supported by feature 'find' available in word processor program. The feature allows the keyword in 'search column' to find the word within the text so it is impossible the words are

missed. While searching and analyzing the tool of ellipsis cohesion and lexical cohesion is done manually by reading the text carefully twice. The following is the layout of five cohesive devices:

#### IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

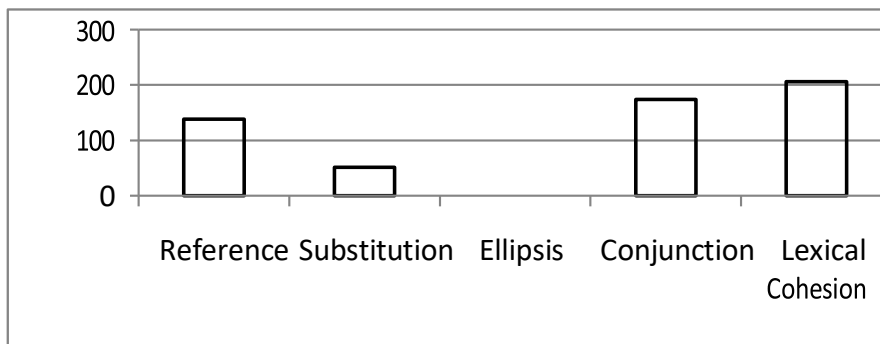
In General all the findings will be presented in the form of tables that contain numbers and percentages. The graph is also inserted as a measure to compare between one types of sample

with another so as to obtain a clear picture of the resulting analysis. Here are the following finding and discussion.

**Table 1. Recapitulation of Cohesive Devices**

	Referenc e	Subst itutio n	Ellipsi s	Conju nctio n	Lexi cal Coh esio n	To tal
Subt otal	138	51	4	174	202	566
Perc entag e	24.8 %	9%	0, 7%	30.7 %	36%	100 %

**Figure 2. Comparison of Cohesive Devices Usage**



On table table 1, of 20 samples had been analyzed, there are 566 cohesive devices found in them. Of the total 566 cohesive devices found there are 138 references which are used as cohesive devices or 24.8% of overall cohesive devices in use. Then it is followed by substitution which are recorded 51 times being applied or 9% of overall cohesive devices. The next cohesive device is conjunction which is used as many as 174 times or 30.7%. the last and most applied cohesive device is lexical cohesion which are used 202 times or 36%.

On figure 2, it is obvious that lexical cohesion has dominated the use of lexical devices in general which is followed by conjunction in second place. Then reference and substitution are in the third and fourth place. While ellipsis is just applied 4 times as a cohesive device in the samples. The following table 2 depicts the analysis of five cohesive devices in detail.

**Table 2. Cohesive Device Usage per Sample**

Sample Number	Reference	Subtitution	Ellipsis	Conjunction	Lexical Cohesion
1	2	3	-	<b>15</b>	13
2	6	2	2	12	<b>26</b>
3	18	4	-	8	<b>27</b>
4	3	4	-	11	<b>18</b>
5	9	-	-	4	<b>12</b>
6	<b>11</b>	4	-	9	7
7	<b>8</b>	2	-	7	5
8	4	-	-	<b>5</b>	-
9	2	2	-	4	<b>5</b>
10	<b>11</b>	1	-	6	7
11	6	1	1	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
12	3	3	-	<b>10</b>	3
13	<b>10</b>	7	-	5	5
14	10	2	-	<b>14</b>	9
15	7	6	-	<b>13</b>	2
16	5	1	1	11	<b>26</b>
17	4	-	-	<b>11</b>	9
18	9	5	-	6	<b>12</b>
19	8	-	-	<b>12</b>	5
20	2	<b>4</b>	-	3	<b>4</b>
Total	138	51	-	174	202



Total	4	1	4	8	9
Domination					

Note: Numbers in **bold** dominates the cohesive devices usage per sample

Table 2 shows that the use of lexical cohesion dominates the use of cohesive devices in journals 9 times out of 20 samples. This is directly proportional to the number of lexical cohesion usage in Table 1. It is seen from Table 2 that the use of lexical cohesion does not differ much with the use of conjunction which is 8 times. In general, it can be concluded that there is a balancing of the use between lexical cohesion and conjunction. Although when it is reviewed per-sample, the use of lexical cohesion and conjunction experienced much inequality. Of the 2, 3, 4, and 16 samples, lexical cohesion was so dominant which is almost twice of the total number of all cohesive are additive and contrastive conjunctions such as ‘*and*’, ‘*but*’, ‘*however*’, ‘*nevertheless*’, ‘*in addition*’, and ‘*then*’. While the most common causative and temporal conjunctions are ‘*because*’, ‘*due to*’, ‘*first*’, ‘*second*’, and ‘*next*’. Then from Table 2, it can also be seen the use of reference as many as four times which dominate cohesive devices in the journal with a total of 138 times usage. A very striking difference in the use of a reference does not make the writing in the journal immature. Although the use of the reference

devices. It can be seen in samples 2, 3, 4, and 16 that the use of lexical cohesion varies between 7 to 16 times compare with either conjunction or reference. So that it can be interpreted that there has been overuse in lexical cohesive device per-sample text.

Conjunction is the second most cohesive device which dominates the use of the cohesive devices in the journal which is used 138 times (Table 2). Of 8 samples 1, 8, 12, 11, 14, 15, 17, 19, it is seen that the use of conjunction is not too much difference with repetition and reference so it can be said that the balancing occurs among those cohesive devices. In addition, the most common types of conjunctions offsets the use of lexical cohesion since the reference requires a noun. While on samples 6, 7, 10, and 13 in Table 2, the use of reference does not differ much with conjunction or lexical cohesion.

The next cohesive device is substitution which dominates once in the journal and it too shares with the repetition which is utilized 4 times in the sample 20th. The minimal use of substitutions is consistent with Károly (2017) statement “*These two grammatical cohesive devices*

*(Substitution and Ellipsis) are rarely used in*

Then the limited number of ellipsis found in the samples (just 4 times) reveals that it has limited application as well. Although if the research involves more samples, the result of will show different number. However the most important point is ellipsis has minor use as cohesive devices since its grammatical structure that limits it use as a cohesive device to form cohesive ties (Károly, 2017).

Of the five cohesions employed, it is also found that the use of cohesive devices in a balanced manner strengthens the cohesive ties between sentences, as seen in the following journal samples:

*“Specifically, **the study** has two main purposes. **Firstly, it** aims to unveil **the lexical choices** that Thai fourth-year English-major students at Thammasat University utilized to enact the Baan Nontapum Foundation (BNF) and the identities*

*given genre.”*

*of children with disabilities on **their** self-designed websites. **Secondly, the study** attempts to investigate how and why **those** particular **lexical choices** were selected by the English-major”*

It is seen from the text that the writer applies 4 cohesive devices to form cohesive ties. They are repetition with the word “**the study**” and “**the lexical choices**”, reference in “**it**”, “**their**”, temporal conjunction in “**Firstly**”, “**Secondly**” and other form “**Specifically**”, and substitution in “**those**”.

The discussion of lexical cohesion also reveals an interesting fact. From the calculated data it is exposed that the number of repetition used in scientific journals is caused by the number of registers usage in writing. Around 80 percent of repetition is related to the use of registers. The following table presents the complete data of usage as lexical cohesion

**Table 3. Lexical Cohesion Recapitulation**

Repetition	Synonym& Antonym	Collocation	Hyponim/Superordinate	Total
189	-	17	-	206
92%	-	8%	-	100%

The following paragraph taken from the sample shows how repetition is really dominant to form cohesive ties among sentences.

*“The investigation of these two features is significant for the following reasons. First, many **L2** learners of English appear confuse*

*these two complement constructions (Schwartz & Causarano, 2007). Second, grammarians and language teachers think the **infinitive and gerund complement** constructions are very difficult to teach or even unteachable because of their complexity (Kitikanan, 2011; Schwartz & Causarano, 2007). Third, it is virtually impossible to distinguish **verbs triggering the infinitive complement construction** from **verbs triggering the gerund complement construction** without consulting a good dictionary (Swan, 2005). Finally, it is more interesting to look specifically at **L1 Thai learners' production and perception of English infinitive and gerund complement constructions** because they have no parallel in Thai."*

The register (italics & bold), which is widely used in academic writing like jurnal, reveals how the paragraph is bonded together to form coherence (unity) within paragraph. From this preception it can be inferred that repetition as a part of lexical cohesion is one of the regular practice of using cohesive devices in writing jurnal since its need of technical terms for particular naming. So that the repetition is

needed to sound the emphasis of subject – related being researched. That is why the use of repetition in jurnal exceed the use of conjunction

The fact further corroborates the claims expressed by Dooley and Levinsohn in Eggins & Martin (2001) that "*Register deals with how an entire speech community typically uses language differently in different situations*"

From the analysis, it can be summed up the use of repetition in a discourse is closely related to the genre as a format in the text. The findings which tells that repetition is applied so often in journals raises two main questions:

1. Is frequent use of repetition is affected by the ease of using this type of cohesive device (the author only needs to repeat the cohesive devices to form cohesive ties)?
2. Are there other factors that affect authors, such as limited lexicon abilities or other limitations that influence the choice of other lexical cohesive devices?

From the two questions, it is necessary to conduct further research regarding this issue which result further understanding of nature of repetition and other lexical cohesive devices in jurnal in particular and text in general.

## V. CONCLUSIONS

From the finding and analysis of the sample, the overuse relatively does not occur among lexical cohesion, conjunction, and reference. Eventhough other lexical cohesive devices, substitution and ellipsis, are rarely used as cohesive devices to form cohesive ties in the text. However that does not mean both cohesive device is underuse. The nature of both cohesive devices which is restricted by their gramartical structure forbid them to be utilized as many as other lexical devices as it is claimed by Károly (2017).

Repetition as a part of lexical cohesive devices is obviously overuse as cohesive devices to form cohesive ties. It was found 189 times of repetition (92%) which confirms the claim. As a result the finding raises two questions which is revealed in previous section.

This study, however, involved a very limited number of sample journal in EFL asian journal and, as such, this is a limitation that needs to be acknowledged. Further research should pursue the same issue, the use of cohesive devices in EFL Asian Journal with a larger number of samples. Furthermore, it is suggested that the focus of the research should be overuse of repetition as a part of lexical cohesive devices

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