CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter is split into three subheadings. Each of them describes three aspects which include conclusion, limitation of the study and recommendation, as presented consecutively below.

5.1 Conclusion

The data presented in the previous sections indicate that on the one hand, they confirm what has been found in some previous studies. On the other hand, the data suggest several findings that need supports from future research to verify them. In relationship with what the data of the research confirm and suggest, as have been discussed in the previous chapters, Chapter 4 especially, some conclusions can be drawn. They are presented below.

In response to the first research question, the realization of cohesion across the three proficiency levels showed that lexical cohesion was the most frequent cohesive tie, followed successively by reference, tense consistency, conjunction, grammatical parallelism, ellipsis and substitution. For this reason, the study suggests that lexical cohesion, not reference, be mentioned first in the theory of patterns of cohesion although this is contrary to the common practice. To mention reference first in the theory is misleading as the device is not the most frequently used cohesive tie.

It is also suggested that one of the subclass of lexical cohesion, repetititon, when relied on heavily, be an indicator of a poor writing achievement. Another subclass, collocation, when predominantly deployed, is the best gauge of highly-rated writing quality.

Related to the cohesive device of reference, the data showed that endophora was the most frequently exploited compared with the other systems. The other systems, homophora exophora and locational reference followed subsequently as the second, third and last frequent.

As for the realization of conjunction, it was found that enhancement was the conjunctive category that occured mostly in the Argumentative texts investigated in this study. This is in line with some linguists' suggestions. This category of conjunction was in turn followed by extension, elaboration and continuative.

Further, the data showed that ellipsis and substitution turned out to be the rarest two devices to occur in this study. Possibly, the reason comes from the learners' lack of language resources to choose from. It is, however, more obvious that the reason is because the two devices are not the linguistic characteristics of an Argumentative text but of a dialogue to exchange ideas or information (see Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 536).

Taken together, the realizations of cohesive devices above indicated that the profiles of cohesion across the high, middle and low achievers were different. In short, there appears a relation between the number of cohesive ties used in a text and its quality. As already discussed, this finding is in line with some other studies which have investigated cohesion in its more complete construct, involving not only grammatical but also lexical cohesion with its subclasses.

Based on the finding above, this research suggests that if a study of cohesion involves its complete construct (involving lexical cohesion, especially), the study will come with a consistent result that there is a relation between the number of cohesive ties used in a text and its quality. On the other hand, if a study does not, its results will tend to show inconsistency.

In relationship to the second research question, the data revealed that lexical cohesion has the highest contribution to the total cohesive density. It contributed between 42 and 46 per cent (see Table 4.1). This finding supports what has been found by other researchers (Hasan, 1984 and Hoey, 1991).

Besides providing the contribution of lexical cohesion to the cohesive density, this study suggests the contributions of other cohesive devices. Reference contributed between 28 and 29 per cent, tense consistency between 15 and 16.5 per cent, conjunction between 6 and 8 per cent, grammatical parallelism around 2 per cent, ellipsis and substitution between 0 and 1 per cent. These need, however, confirmation or disconfirmation from future studies.

Referring to the third research question, the data of students' errors in employing the cohesive devices indicated that more errors were made as the learners' proficiency got lower. Though this finding was predictable, it confirmed the assertion that there was a close relation between the realization (not only the right but also erroneous employment) of cohesive devices and the students' language development.

The finding was also confirmed by the data derived from the interviews with the students. The data showed that there was also a relationship between students' level of proficiency with their spoken performances in using the devices. The more developed their spoken proficiency was, the less errors they made in resorting to the devices and the more confident they were in their performances.

All in all, it is obvious that the cohesive devices play a pivotal role, especially in enabling the students to become better writers. Therefore, the cohesive devices should be taught explicitly in teaching language skills, especially writing. These devices can be integerated, for example, into the reading materials usually provided for the the teaching process of writing due to the close connection between the two skills.

5.2 Limitation

This study, just like many other studies, has some limitations in it. First, besides it is a case study in nature, this study was conducted over limited number of texts and participants. As a result, the findings of this research cannot be claimed to be generally found too across different contexts of time and place.

Second, the texts investigated in this study were the results of writing performances produced in a test with a time constraint. Therefore, the texts may not thoroughly reflect the learners' default writing skill. It is quite likely that their true writing skill is higher than that reflected in their Argumentative texts which have been analyzed in this study as its corpus.

Third, the inclusion of two learners, out of three, into the category of high achievers might cause potential biases. The inclusion of the two was not

supported by the formal document of their academic achievements in the subject of Essay Writing I, which is encoded IG2093, as seen in Appendix 5. Based on the the document, only one, the second high achiever, truly belongs to the category. As no other students were listed there as high achievers, the other two, who were actually middle achievers as far as their formal academic performances were concerned, were selected to be high achievers by the researcher though the selection was approved of by their lecturer.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the results of the research, some recommendations need to be made especially for teaching practitioners and those interested in doing research on texture, cohesion and coherence, in the future.

To start with, teachers should prioritize effective activities or exercises related to cohesion in teaching writing. It is recommended that the activities are integrated into the process of teaching writing. These activities also need to be complemented with reading materials since reading is closely connected with writing. This way, besides the students are expected to know the content, they can gain the knowledge of how to create a cohesive text.

It would also be a good idea that the policy makers of education provide the teachers with training. This is to ensure that they obtain the ability of how to employ the cohesive devices effectively. That way, they are expected to be able to show their students how these explicit lexicogrammatical patterns work to make meaning in texts.

For anyone willing to do research on similar fields in the future, this study proposes two recommendations. The first is to conduct research on cohesion where the focus can be on all, some or only one of its devices, while the text type analyzed can be Argumnetative genre or others. If the focus is on one cohesive device, it is advisable to conduct an investigation of tense consistency or grammatical parallelism. These two cohesive devices represent research areas which are still infrequently explored, while the theories concerning them are plentiful enough.

The second is to research on cohesion that offers explicitly practical suggestions of how teachers should teach the students to overcome their problems of writing. Much research, including this one, does not provide such practical suggestions. There is a wide gap in this area of research. Therefore, next research on the cohesive devices is expected to deal with these pedagogical suggestions that will enable the students to exploit the cohesive ties skillfully.

For this kind of research, it is suggested to conduct a study investigating collocation. Collocation, which has attracted the attention of many linguist researchers in recent years, is considered as the main element that shows learners' language proficiency (Mahvelati and Mukundan, 2012: 205) and as an important aspect of communicative competence that discriminates native from non-native (Bazzaz, 2011: 377). Therefore, research on pedagogical practices of this particular cohesive tie would certainly benefit the EFL/ESL learners to improve their writing performances.