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Dedicated to

My beloved family

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ABBREVIATIONS

R: Reference
C: Conjunction
E: Ellipsis
S: Substitution
L: Lexical cohesion
GE: General English
ESP: English for Specific Purposes
EGP: English for General Purposes
SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
EST: English for Science and Technology
EAP: English for Academic Purposes
EOP: English for Occupational Purposes,
EVP: English for Vocational Purposes or
VESL: Vocational English as a Second Language
EBE: English for Business and Economics
ESS: English for Social Sciences
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELT: English Language Teaching
MBA: Master of Business Administration
CNP: Communication Needs Processor

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Linguistics, particularly theoretical linguistics, is concerned with finding and describing generalities both within particular language and among all languages, whereas applied linguistics uses the results of those findings and applies them to other areas. In many cases applied linguistics takes advantage of linguistic researches in language teaching. One of the rich sources of research in linguistics is text linguistics which is a branch of linguistics studying spoken or written texts, e.g. a descriptive passage, a scene in a play, a conversation and it deals with the way the parts of a text are organized and related to one another in order to form a meaningful whole. The application of text linguistics has evolved from its earlier approaches to a point in which text is viewed in much broader terms. It goes beyond the traditional sentence level grammar towards the entire text. According to de Beaugrande (1981) the original aim of text linguistics is uncovering and describing text grammar. The point of such text grammars was to be able to provide an explicit description of the grammatical structures of texts. Cohesion is one of the significant aspects that are taken into consideration in text analysis. Many studies have been carried out to investigate the role and effect of cohesion and cohesive devices in the analysis of English instructional materials of different levels. Among those are Geva (1992), Demel (1990), Olateju (2006), and among Iranian studies are Madani (1992), Bahrami (1992) and Jalali (2004). The few studies conducted in Iran examined the English school text books in high schools to

discover the cohesiveness of them and the effect of it on readers' comprehension, but apart from high school textbooks there are special instructional materials called ESP texts. Obviously, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a very prominent area in EFL teaching today.

The present study aims to investigate the cohesiveness of English for Specific Purposes texts as it is crystal clear that non-native speakers of English language in different countries including Iran draw heavily on ESP textbooks in order to learn and function properly in the English language contexts so the significant role of appropriate, well written materials is felt. Therefore, this descriptive research compares and contrasts the level of ESP texts' cohesion to General English texts with particular attention paid to categories presented by Halliday and Hassan (1976) for cohesive devices.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Nowadays, knowing English is a must for every student particularly at university level. In our educational system, students majoring in one of the different fields offered in universities throughout the country have to pass a three-credit General English course. They are, then, required to pass a three-credit or more ESP courses depending on their majors. However, most of the students and teachers are not satisfied with these ESP classes according to what Bonyadi (1996) claims. Many studies have been carried out to find the answer

to the question of why these courses are not fruitful enough. Gorjian (2006) has noted several limitations concerned with teaching ESP, such as:

1. Teaching ESP courses are mostly considered as teaching general English. The context and the situation of the specific subject do not come into focus.

2. Reading is the main skill and other language skills such as listening, speaking and writing are overlooked.

3. Teacher-centered approaches are dominant. There is no room for the learners to practice what they have learnt.

4. The size of the classrooms is big that is from 40 to 70 students in each classroom.

5. Using L1 is frequent. Matching technical terms with their Persian equivalents is dominant. Translating the whole English text into Persian is one of the tasks.

6. English teachers majoring in various fields of study may teach ESP. A teacher may teach several ESP courses simultaneously.

As Gorjian (2006) mentioned in item number 2, all these courses are presented to students in the form of reading passages which is reading and translating from English into Persian by teacher. The funny point is that although students spend a good number of hours in the classes of these courses, they do encounter problems in understanding and consequently translating the texts. On the other hand, according to Cook (1990), cohesion has often been neglected in language teaching. For years it has been assumed that students' difficulties in understanding texts arise primarily from lack of vocabulary or the complexity of grammatical structure at sentence level, whereas along with other causes for such problems, lack of appropriate

cohesive devices and consequently lack of cohesion might be a good reason for students' inability in fully understanding the texts.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Teaching English to the students of different majors and various issues related to it have been the purpose of many studies since the emergence of ESP courses but have ESP textbooks also received such investigations? Have there been any changes in ESP texts along with GE text?

Since materials and textbooks are an important resource for teachers in helping students to learn English, and since they are the pillars of school instruction and the main resort of information for teachers and students and they are assumed to be an important factor contributing to success in second and foreign language environment, they should be analyzed to find out why students have so many problems in understanding their special language and consequently are incapable of making necessary advancement in their knowledge of English.

Having cohesion and cohesive devices in mind, are ESP texts different from GE texts? The main purpose of this study is to find the answer to this question.

Among the categories available for the base of this contrastive analysis, Halliday and Hassan's (1976) categorization of cohesive devices seems the best because it concerns with written language and it is also very practical.

Therefore, as mentioned before, the present research tries to find the difference between ESP and GE texts in terms of cohesion and cohesive devices.

1.4 Research questions

The present study is after answering the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of reference?

2. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of substitution?

3. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of ellipsis?

4. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of conjunction?

5. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of lexical cohesion?

6. Is there any significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of the total amount of cohesive devices?

1.5 Null hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formed on the above questions:

1. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of reference.

2. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of substitution.

3. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of ellipsis.

4. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of conjunction.

5. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of lexical cohesion.

6. There is no significant difference between GE and ESP texts in terms of total number of cohesive devices.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study will shed light on the area of contrastive analysis in discourse. Then, to the knowledge of its researcher, it will be the only study conducted in the area of text and discourse analysis in ESP and GE which will emphasize the importance of cohesion and cohesive devices. As the demand for English language educational opportunities increases, the demand for appropriately prepared materials increases as well; therefore, the third significance of this study will be the fact that, course designers may benefit

the results of this study in determining what texts to select for their ESP and GE courses. Moreover, the information in this study can be considered and used for pedagogical purposes and pave the way for other studies on text linguistics and contrastive analysis.

1.7 Definitions of the key terms and concepts

1.7.1 Coherence:

It is the relationship which links the meanings of utterances in a discourse of a text. These links may be based on the speakers' shared knowledge. Generally a paragraph has coherence if it is a series of sentences that develop a main idea. (Richards et al, 1992) "Relations of coherence between clauses and sentences of a text are not objective properties of the text; they are relations that have to be established by people interpreting it." Fairclough (1995, p, 122)

1.7.2 Cohesion:

The simplest definition of cohesion is presented by Halliday and Hassan (1976). They say that cohesion refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and consequently define it as a text. And Richards et al (1992) define it as "the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between the different elements of a text. This may be the relationship between different sentences or between different parts of a sentence." (Richards et al, 1992, p.62)

1.7.3 Discourse:

It is a general term for examples of language use, i.e. language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Whereas grammar refers to the rules a language uses to form grammatical units such as clause, phrase, and sentence, discourse refers to larger units such as paragraphs, conversations, and interviews. (Richards et al, 1992, p.111)

1.7.4 Discourse analysis:

According to Richards et al (1992) "discourse analysis is the area of linguistics which is concerned with how we build up meaning in the larger communicative units rather than grammatical units, for instance meaning in a text, paragraph, conversation, etc, rather than in a single sentence." (p.11) In other words, "discourse is a general term for examples of language in use that is language which has been produced as the result of an act of communication. Whereas grammar refers to the rules a language uses to form grammatical units such as clause, phrase and sentences, discourse refers to larger units such as paragraphs, jokes, conversations and interviews." (Richards et al, 1992, p.111) Cook (1990) believes that, "discourse analysis examines how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological context, become meaningful and unified for their users." (p.1)

1.7.5 English for specific purposes (ESP):

"It shows the role of English in a language course or program of instruction in which the content and aims of course are fixed by the specific needs of a particular group of learners, for example courses in English for Academic Purposes, English for Science and Technology, and English for Nursing." (Richards et al, 1992, p.125)

1.7.6 Contrastive analysis:

It is the comparison of the linguistic systems of two languages, for example the sound system or the grammatical system. Contrastive analysis was developed and practiced in 1950s and 1960s, as an application of structural linguistics to language teaching. In recent years, contrastive analysis has been applied to other areas of language, for example the discourse systems. This is called contrastive discourse analysis. (Richards et al, 1992)

1.8 Limitations of the study

Limitations identify potential weaknesses of the study; certain limitations will be imposed on this study as well:

1. Since only 30 texts were selected, it may affect the generalizability of the results. More precise and accurate results could be reported if it was possible to analyze more texts from more diverse majors.

2. There are many branches in science and humanities, this study could not cover the ESP texts of different majors and therefore, it was limited to the analysis of ESP texts of few majors.