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A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT OCEANIC PROTECTION

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(A SUMMARY)

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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Covering more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface, oceans are home to most of the life on our planet and have always played an important part in human life. Oceans not only generate half of the oxygen we breathe but also contain 97 percent of the world's water (NOAA, 2019). Thus, it is vital to human health as well, providing jobs, relaxation and enjoyment, and food to billions of people (Hocever, 2015).

However, the ocean is being increasingly industrialized with overfishing, deep-sea exploitation, aquaculture, pollution and human impact on oceans is escalating rapidly. All of human activities are threating the health of the world's oceans.

Nowadays, with the great development of internet technologies, the trend of getting news via electronic newspapers has become popular. In particular, the newspaper is considered as one of the most effective means not only to convey information to people but also to reflect the current situation in a timely manner and calls for readers' awareness. For instant, the ocean issues are being taken very seriously today, so there are many authorized organizations in the world have published a huge of writings about oceanic protection.

Hence, it is important to understand the languages used in these articles because they have many linguistic characteristics. The authors need to choose the most effective expressions of writing technique to create their own texts as well as to organize and develop

the ideas reasonably. Therefore, studying articles written about oceanic protection is also a way of studying linguistics. The author wants to transfer his intention to the readers via linguistic devices such as syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices.

For the above reasons, I have decided to choose "**A Discourse Analysis of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection**" as my M.A thesis. With an attempt to examine the syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices of ENAOP, I do hope that the results of this research will partially contribute to the process of teaching and learning English, especially for those who are interested in this field.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims of the study

This research aims to identify some discourse features of English articles about oceanic protection in terms of their syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices. Besides, it is hoped that the results of this study may help the teachers; the Vietnamese leaners of English understand and grasp the distinctive characteristics of ENAOP as well as improve their English reading and writing skills on articles.

1.2.2. Objectives

To achieve the aims of the study, the researcher tries to reach the following objectives:

- To identify and describe the syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices of ENAOP in English newspapers.

- To suggest some useful implications for teachers and learners of English in Vietnam.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the aims and objectives above, the following research questions are raised:

1. What are the syntactic features of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection?

2. What are the lexical choices of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection?

3. What are the cohesive devices used in English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

With the aims and objective mentioned above, this study focuses on the investigation of some discourse features of ENAOP in terms of their syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices.

The English articles which serve as data in this thesis are taken from official websites of five US's electronic newspapers namely The New York Times, News Deeply, Science Daily, National Geographic, Ocean News & Technology and five UK's electronic newspapers including The Guardian, Earth Times, Independent, Mail Online, GOV. UK in the period of 2013- 2018.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the aim to make a study on the discourse features of ENAOP, this study is hoped to be a part of practical piece of work to help English learners to have a better understanding of the use of English in writing good and effective articles according to the author's intention. Specifically, this research may help the readers and learners comprehend the specific knowledge of discourse features in ENAOP in terms of syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study consists of five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Methods and Procedures

Chapter 4: Finding and Discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusion, implications, limitations, suggestions for further research

Chapter Two
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Discourse analysis is an important discipline, which attracts the interest of many linguists and researchers. Up to now, there have been some erudite linguists who gave the foundation and made great contribution for discourse analysis such as Harris (1952) with the study "Discourse Analysis". Among the coherence-based definitions, one of the first works on textual relations was "Cohesion in English", by Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 87), which provided a comprehension overview of the cohesion. They defined text as language elements associated with each other in relationship.

Besides, Brown and Yule (1983) mention to the major sectors of discourse like cohesion, coherence, theme-rheme structure, information structure, frame, schemata, role context and genre in their work. Additionally, Cook (1989) in the book "Discourse" aims to explain the theory of discourse analysis and to demonstrate its practical relevance to language learning and teaching. Nunan (1993) in "Introducing Discourse analysis" explains several essential concepts in the discipline of discourse and discourse analysis.

In Vietnam, many linguists have made considerable contribution to the study of discourse and discourse analysis. Trần Ngọc Thêm (1985) made a detail and systematic analysis of cohesive devices in Vietnamese texts in the book "Hệ thống liên kết văn bản Tiếng Việt". Diệp Quang Ban (1998) in his work with "Văn bản và liên kết trong Tiếng Việt" also paid much attention to cohesive

devices. Nguyễn Thiện Giáp (2000) with "Dẫn luận ngôn ngữ" reported a general view of pragmatics when he mentioned a set of such different aspects as context and semantics, information structures.

As far as I know, although there have been many researches on the linguistics features of articles, there is no evidence that any study on discourse features of ENAOP has been implemented. Thus, *"A Discourse Analysis of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection"* would be conducted with the hope of contributing a minor part to this field.

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Discourse and Discourse Analysis

2.2.1.1. Concepts of Discourse

In this part, I review some definitions related to discourse of the linguists such as Cook (1989), Brown and Yule (1983), Stubbs (1983), Nunan (1993), Harris (1952). In this thesis I view discourse as language in use or stretches of language which has meaning, unity and purpose.

2.2.1.2. Discourse analysis

2.2.1.3. Kind of Discourse Processing

2.2.1.4. The framework of news discourse

2.2.2. Written and Spoken Discourse

2.2.3. Text and its features

2.2.3.1. Text

2.2.3.2. Features of Text

With the definitions of text, I review some definitions related to text of the linguists such as Brown and Yule (1983), Stubbs (1983), Harris (1952). The concepts of text in this thesis are regarded

as a language in use, for communication which has meaning, unity and purpose.

2.2.4. Cohesion and Coherence

Cohesion and coherence are two terms which have become popular in discourse analysis and text linguistics.

2.2.4.1. Coherence

2.2.4.2. Cohesion

2.2.5. Syntactic Features and Lexical Features

2.2.5.1. Syntactic features

2.2.5.2. Lexical choices

2.2.6. Newspaper and Electronic Newspaper

a. Newspaper

b. Electronic newspaper

2.2.7. Definitions of Terms in ENAOP

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary- 9th Edition (2015), these terms are defined as follows:

a. *"Article"*

b. *"Ocean"*

c. *"Protection"*

2.3. SUMMARY

Chapter Three
RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

Quantitative and qualitative approaches: According to Wray and Bloomer (2006), one of the key features of linguistic variables is that they can often be counted or quantified. The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Firstly, the qualitative approach, by definition, involves description and analysis rather than the counting of features. It is used to describe and analyze data to find out the distinctive features of articles about oceanic protection in terms of their lexical choices, syntactic features and cohesive devices. Secondly, the study utilized the quantitative approach to determine the occurrence, the percentage of some linguistic devices in ENAOP.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS

To achieve the goal of this study, it is impossible to use a single method, but several methods are simultaneously employed.

- Descriptive method: it is used to give a detailed description of the typical discourse features of ENAOP.

- Analytic method: By using this method, the researcher can clarify and justify a certain feature or characteristic.

- Inductive method: By means of induction, the researcher can synthesize the findings and draw out the generalizations and conclusions from the findings.

3.3. DESCRIPTION OF DATA

In order to prepare samples for the research, I proceeded to collect data as follows:

- The data must be English newspaper articles about oceanic protection in written form.

- The data are collected from official websites of five English electronic newspapers in the United States and five English electronic newspapers in the United Kingdom, which are well-known and have a wide circulation.

- The choice was focused on English articles published in the period of 2013 to 2018.

- The data were chosen with the average length ranging from 500 to 1000 words. It takes about 3 to 5 minutes to read each of these articles. This is a reasonable reading time for readers on smart devices.

- Finally, most of these articles are about well-known Organizations or famous People that have great influence in calling citizens' awareness to protect the ocean.

With the above criteria, I have collected 50 articles of ENAOP from the official websites for a detailed investigation.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

The data used in this study was collected from popular and prestigious English electronic newspapers in the US and the UK as follows:

Table 3.1. Names and websites of Electronic Newspapers

No.	Names of Electronic Newspapers	Websites
1	The New York Times	https://www.nytimes.com/topic/subject/oceans
2	News Deeply	https://www.newsdeeply.com/oceans

No.	Names of Electronic Newspapers	Websites
3	Science Daily	https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/earth_climate/oceanography/
4	National Geographic	https://www.nationalgeographic.com/
5	Ocean News & Technology	https://www.oceannews.com/
6	Earth Times	http://www.earthtimes.org
7	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/oceans
8	Independent	https://www.independent.co.uk/
9	Mail Online	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/
10	GOV. UK	https://www.gov.uk/government/news/

With the techniques of searching, copying and downloading, etc. as well as by the computer tools for storing, assessing and backing up, I collected 50 samples of ENAOP to analyze the available data.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Based on 50 ENAOP in this study, data analysis was carried out to identify the discourse features as follows:

- Syntactic features: I examined which sentence structures are frequently used in English newspaper articles about oceanic protection.

- Lexical choices: I investigated choices of words commonly used in English newspaper articles about oceanic protection.

- Cohesive devices: I surveyed the frequency of the use of the employing of grammatical and lexical cohesion as cohesive devices in ENAOP.

3.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURES
3.7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Chapter Four
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. SYNTACTIC FEATURES OF ENAOP

In this study, I make an effort to investigate into the most considerable structures in Articles about oceanic protection which are *The Passive Voice, Relative Clauses, Direct and Indirect Speeches*.

4.1.1. The passive Voice

In the collected samples of ENAOP, the passive voice is commonly used to emphasize not only the threats of the ocean but also the awareness the readers can get to appeal the protection of the ocean. According to Quirk et al. (1985, p. 166), "the passive voice is more commonly used in informative than in imaginative writing and is notably frequent in the objective, impersonal style of scientific article and news reporting". This is the reason why the passive voice takes up the remarkable percentage in ENAOP. The English passive voice is formed by the following structure by Quirk et al. (1985):

Subject + Verb $_{passive}$ (be/get + p.p) + Optional Agent (by–Phrase)

In the collected samples of ENAOP, the passive voice is also usually accompanied with following modal verbs "**can, could, will, would, should, may, must**". Such passive sentences follow the construction below:

Subject + Verb $_{passive}$ (modal verb + be + p.p) + Optional Agent (by–Phrase)

Table 4.1. Distribution of Passive Voice in ENAOP

Passive Voice	Occurrence	Rate
With Agent	84	18.79%
Without Agent	363	81.21%
Total	**447**	**100%**

4.1.2. Relative Clauses

In ENAOP, the writers use the relative clause as a post-modifier for a noun phrase is to give additional information without starting another sentence. As a result, the texts will become more fluent, concise and easier for readers to understand.

Table 4.2. Distribution of Relative Clauses in ENAOP

Types of Relative Clauses	Occurrence	Rate
Restrictive RCls	364	86.46%
Non-restrictive RCls	57	13.54%
Total	**421**	**100%**

4.1.3. Direct and Indirect Speeches

The function of reported speech is to convey information in two steps: from a source to a reporter, and from the reporter to the reader. The reporter can use the mechanism of reported speech to not only reproduce the content of the utterance, but to reproduce and clarify the whole speech act (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969).

4.1.3.1. Direct Speech

4.1.3.2. Indirect Speech

Table 4.3. Direct speech and Indirect speech in ENAOP

Reported speech	Occurrence	Rate
Direct speech	234	64.04%
Indirect speech	163	35.96%
Total	**397**	**100%**

In conclusion, the syntactic features in ENAOP are illustrated in the following table:

Table 4.5. Syntactic Features in ENAOP

Type	Occurrence	Rate
Passive Voice	447	35.34%
Relative Clauses	421	33.28%
Direct and Indirect Speeches	397	31.38%
Total	**1265**	**100%**

4.2. LEXICAL CHOICE USED IN ENAOP

4.2.1. Descriptive Adjectives

In articles about oceanic protection, the descriptive adjectives are used with a surprising number to describe the impacts of many factors to the ocean as well as the appeals for help.

The distribution of the descriptive adjectives in base form, comparative form and superlative form is illustrated in the table 4.6:

Table 4.6. Forms of Descriptive Adjectives in ENAOP

Descriptive Adjectives	Occurrence	Rate
Base Form	854	72.01%
Comparative Form	225	18.97%
Superlative Form	107	9.02%

Total	**1186**	**100%**

4.2.2. Modal verbs

Modal verbs- also called modal auxiliaries are special verbs which behave irregularly in English. They give additional information about the function of the main verb that follows it.

According to Alexander (1992, p. 207), the common verbs which share the same grammatical characteristics are: *can- could, may- might, will- would, shall- should, must* and *ought to*. Meanwhile, Quirk et al. (1985, p. 219) divided the constraining factors of meaning into two types.

Table 4.7. Frequency of Modal verbs in ENAOP

Modal verbs	Occurrence	Rate
Will	149	30.66%
Would	54	11.11%
Can(not)	104	21.40%
Could	39	8.02%
Should	33	6.79%
May	25	5.14%
Might	10	2.06%
Must	18	3.70%
Need	31	6.67%
Ought to	2	0.41%
Total	**465**	**100%**

4.2.3. Compounds

Quirk et al. (1985, p.1568-1570) state that Compounds consist of combining words having their own lexical meaning to produce a new unit that functions as a single word. The use of a variety of compounds makes ENAOP more interesting and attractive.

Table 4.8. Distribution of Forms of Compounds in ENAOP

Compounds	Formation	Examples
Compound Nouns	Noun + Noun	Jelly-fish Sea-horse Road-map
	Noun + present participle	Hand-fishing World-leading
	Preposition + present participle	Over-fishing
Compound Adjectives	Noun + Adjective	World-wide Plastic-free Rainbow-colored, knowledge-intensive
	Adverb + past participle	Newly-protected Well-known
	Noun + past participle	Farm-raised Science-based, Marine-protected

	Preposition + noun	Under-water Off-limits Over-seas
	Adjective + adjective	Short-tailed Soft-bodied
	Adjective + past participle	Long-planned Long-delayed

4.2.4. Proper Names

Proper names are some of the most popular lexical choices in ENAOP. Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2012) state that proper names are expressions which have been conventionally adopted as the names of a particular or a collection of entities.

Table 4.9. Proper names in ENAOP

Proper names	Occurrence	Rate
Names of people	329	23.40%
Names of Institutions/ Organizations	296	21.05%
Names of places	753	53.56%
Names of others	28	1.99%
Total	**1406**	**100%**

4.2.5. Summary

Table 4.10. Distribution of Lexical choices in ENAOP

Lexical features	Occurrence	Rate
Descriptive Adjectives	1186	34.39%

Modal verbs	465	13.48%
Compounds	392	11.37%
Proper names	1406	40.77%
Total	**3449**	**100%**

4.3. COHESIVE DEVICES USED IN ENAOP

4.3.1. Grammatical cohesion

According to Halliday and Hasan's theory (1976) on cohesion, grammatical cohesion consists of four types of cohesive devices: *reference, substitution, ellipsis* and *conjunction.*

4.3.1.1. Reference

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), reference refers to the semantic relationship between linguistic expressions. In the collected samples, the majority of reference in ENAOP is anaphora, which consists of three following types: *personal reference, demonstrative reference,* and *comparative reference.*

a. Personal Reference

b. Demonstrative Reference

c. Comparative Reference

Table 4.11. Distribution of Reference in ENAOP

Type of Reference	Occurrence	Rate
Personal	709	33.55%
Demonstrative	1053	49.83%
Comparative	351	16.61%
Total	**2113**	**100%**

4.3.1.2. Ellipsis

According to Nunan (1993), "Ellipsis" is defined as a certain structural element is omitted from a sentence or clause and only can be recovered by referring to an element in the preceding text. Ellipsis is normally an anaphoric relation and consists of three types: *Nominal, Verbal and Clausal.*

Table 4.12. Distribution of Ellipsis in ENAOP

Type of Ellipsis	Occurrence	Rate
Nominal	114	74.03%
Verbal	27	17.53%
Clausal	13	8.44%
Total	**154**	**100%**

4.3.1.3. Conjunction

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p.238), conjunction expresses certain meanings which presuppose the presence of their components in the discourse. They also divided conjunction into 4 categories: *Additive, Adversative, Causal* and *Temporal.*

Table 4.13. Distribution of Conjunction in ENAOP

Type of Conjunction	Occurrence	Rate
Additive	1182	72.07%
Adversative	190	11.59%
Causal	83	5.06%
Temporal	185	11.28%
Total	**1640**	**100%**

4.3.2. Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion is the selection of items that are related in some way to those that have gone before. In this paper, I pay special attention to the reiteration of lexical choices. Halliday and Hasan (1976) also indicate that reiteration consists of repetition, synonym, super-ordinate and general word. However, for the sake of unity in analysis, only repetition and synonym are examined.

Table 4.14. Reiteration in ENAOP

Reiteration	Occurrence	Rate
Repetition	43	89.58%
Synonym	5	10.42%
Total	**48**	**100%**

The overview of grammatical and lexical cohesion employed in ENAOP is shown in the following table:

Table 4.15. Distribution of Cohesive Devices in ENAOP

Types of Cohesive Devices		Occurrence	Rate
Grammatical Cohesive Devices	Reference	2113	53.43%
	Conjunction	1640	41.47%
	Ellipsis	154	3.89%
Lexical Cohesive Devices	Reiteration	48	1.21%
Total		**3955**	**100%**

4.4. SUMMARY

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

"A Discourse Analysis of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection" has been carried out with the aim of discovering how ENAOP are structured and what typical discourse features are in use in the English language. In order to reach this goal, I have concentrated on investigating and finding out the syntactic features, lexical features and cohesive devices of ENAOP. Consequently, typical features are found out and drawn into conclusion.

The study is employed on the basic of theories of discourse analysis of Cook (1989), Halliday (1976), Brown and Yule (1983), grammatical theory of Quirk et al. (1985), and cohesive theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976). Below are some results summarized after ENAOP have been investigated:

With regard to Syntactic features, this thesis deals with *passive voice, relative clauses* as well as *direct and indirect speeches*. Among them, passive voice appears in all of ENAOP to describe the realities and the hazards of the ocean. The passive voice may be one of a good means to arouse the readers' attention and they make ENAOP unified grammatically. Additionally, the writers have a strong tendency to use direct and indirect speeches to express the

objectivity and reliability of the articles. Besides, taking up 33.28%, the relative clauses are commonly used in ENAOP to provide further information about the state of the ocean in general.

In terms of Lexical choices, this thesis deals with *descriptive adjectives, modal verbs, compounds* and *proper names*. It is interesting that proper names occur in most of ENAOP to describe the names of the institutes, organizations, people, places and others and accounting for the highest frequency (40.77%). Another point which should be mentioned is the occurrence of descriptive adjectives, which are used in three forms: the base form, the comparative form and the superlative form, with the different frequencies. They are used to describe the state, habitat, length, shape, etc. and provide additional emotional context to the lexical items it modifies to make the whole text more attractive and interesting. These adjectives are found in 1186 cases, taking up quite high percentage (34.39%). In addition, modal verbs and compounds also contribute to the success of ENAOP. By using compounds to create the meaning of a word which is easier to comprehend or modal verbs to change the modality of a sentence- the attitude of the speaker or writer to the action indicated by a verb, the writers want to show the determination, efforts, plans that individuals and organizations set out to achieve the goal of protecting ocean.

As regards to cohesive devices, *Reference, Conjunction, Ellipsis* and *Lexical Cohesion* are explored in ENAOP. Cohesion is a linguistic device that contributes to establish the connection between

text elements. Reference is a preferable means to create textual cohesion in ENAOP, taking up the highest rate of all cohesive devices (53.43%). Conjunction is also dominant among other devices, comprising 41.47%, much higher than the rest. The lowest frequency is the use of reiteration, accounting for 1.21%. Such a combination of different cohesive devices is of great benefit to connect the sentences in the texts together effectively.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

I have made the great effort to find out the typical discourse features of ENAOP. On carrying out this thesis, it is our hope that this thesis may have some small contributions   not only to writing an effective ENAOP but also to teaching and learning English among Vietnamese learners. Some suggestions are to be pointed out for language learning and teaching.

To teachers:

Enhancing people's awareness of the importance of the ocean and calling for protect the oceans from the hazards, the analysis of ENAOP is to make some beneficial advantages. This thesis will probably be a useful reference source for teaching English to Vietnamese learners. Hopefully, the findings of the study will probably help equip teacher with useful knowledge in the field of discourse analysis in some common features of ENAOP, such as syntactic features, lexical features and cohesive devices. As a result, by constructing practice exercises as well as introducing different

genres of English, it is a good foundation that teachers can help students develop their writing skill to produce an effective writing.

To learners:

The thesis will also be beneficial to learners of English to be equipped with handful of vocabulary and grammar of this type of discourse. This thesis provides learners with the knowledge of discourse features in terms of layouts, syntactic structures, lexical choices and cohesive devices. These help learners improve linguistic background, methods and strategies to write an attractive text in general and an English newspaper article about oceanic protection in particular.

5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because of the shortage of time, reference material and limited linguistic knowledge of the researcher, this study has certain restrictions. In English language, discourse analysis is a vast field consisting of many subfields to be explored. However, this thesis only focuses on some discourse features in terms of syntactic features, lexical choices and cohesive devices in ENAOP. It is obviously that the thesis has not reached the expected depth and the results are not as satisfactory as it should have been.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCHES

For the aim of making further researches into this domain, some suggestions would be put forward as follows:

1. An Investigation into Stylistics Devices of English Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection.

2. A Discourse Analysis of Newspaper Articles about Oceanic Protection (English versus Vietnamese).