

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF DANANG

PHẠM THỊ MAI HUỆ

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF READING PASSAGES IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS
CURRENTLY
USED IN VIETNAMESE HIGH SCHOOLS

Field Study : THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Code : 60.22.15

M.A. THESIS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
(A SUMMARY)

Danang 2011

The thesis has been completed at the College of Foreign Languages, University of Danang.

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Luu Quý Khương

Examiner 1: Dương Bạch Nhật, Ph. D.

Examiner 2: Lê Tân Thi, Ph. D.

The thesis will be orally defended at the Examining Committee.

Time: 7th January, 2012

Venue: University of Danang

The original of thesis is accessible for the purpose of reference at the College of Foreign Languages Library, and the Information Resources Center, Danang University

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

Nowadays, English has become an international language. Many countries all over the world use it as second language to communicate. In Vietnam, English has also been generally used and has become a compulsory subject in every high school.

In fact, one of the most important components in language instruction is materials. Materials are resource books for ideas and activities for learning and teaching. The reading passages are designed for developing students' reading skill. It helps the students not only grasp new language items in the presentation of reading texts but also creates the basic knowledge to finish the tasks and activities given in the following sections of the textbooks. All the reading passages in the Vietnamese high school currently- used English textbooks have an authentic source. However, the number of new words in each reading passage is large but they have not been suitably graded for the level of students because the students stay at different areas with different levels of English proficiency. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the specific features of the reading passages in the high school currently - used English textbooks is very important for teachers and students.

From these above reasons, I have decided to choose **“A Discourse Analysis of Reading Passages in English Textbooks Currently-used in Vietnamese High Schools”** as the topic of my thesis.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims of the Study

This study mainly aims at carrying out a discourse analysis of reading passages on English textbooks currently- used in Vietnamese high Schools in order to find out the features of lexis, syntax, and cohesive devices. And simultaneously, the pedagogical recommendations set forth at the end of this study will help improve the teaching and learning of English at high school and contribute to the successful implementation of “National Foreign Languages Project, 2020”.

1.2.2. Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the above aims, the objectives of the study are:

- To find out the lexical, grammatical features and cohesive devices of the reading passages in high school currently- used in English textbooks (HSCETs) in Vietnam.
- To suggest some implications for teaching and learning English reading comprehension at high schools.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Some findings in terms of the grammar, lexis and cohesive devices in the reading passages can be useful in helping them improve their reading skill.

The thesis is only regarded as a preliminary study and any conclusions are tentative and suggestive. Therefore, the intention of this study is to illuminate the features of reading passages, and to help Vietnamese learners of English and English teachers know all

about the features of reading passages in English to improve their English learning and teaching quality.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To obtain the above aims, the following research questions could be put forward:

- What are the lexical, grammatical features and cohesive devices of reading passages in HSCETs?
- What are the implications of the study for teaching and learning English reading comprehension at Vietnamese high schools?

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the analysis of reading passages collected from the currently- used English textbooks for high school Grade 10, 11 and 12. The discourse analysis in this paper just focused on the analysis of grammatical features, lexical features and cohesive devices used in reading passages.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study consists of five chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the rationale, the aims and objectives, the scope of the study, the research questions, the significance and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews the previous studies related to the problem under investigation, comments on some unsolved problems and presents some theoretical preliminaries, which serve as a foundation for the study.

Chapter 3 includes the methods of the study and procedures that the study follows. It also has a description of the process of data

collection, data analysis, instruments, the procedures, the reliability and validity of the study.

Chapter 4 displays and discusses the results of the study. It presents the feature of reading comprehension passages in terms of grammar, vocabulary and transition signals.

Chapter 5 gives a summary of the development of the study, a brief restatement of the findings, some implications, limitations and suggests for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter first reviews prior researches related to the problem under investigation. Then, it explores the concept of discourse and discourse analysis, the characteristics and types of reading passages in HSCETs.

2.2. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES RELATED TO THE RESEARCH

Discourse analysis (DA) itself is a broad field related to the study of language in use. Distinguished scholars of various times such as Halliday and Hasan [31], Brown and Yule [8], Widdowson [83], Cook [17], and so on, have written a lot of books on discourse and DA.

In Vietnam, there are a number of linguists who have made great contributions to the study of DA. Nguyễn Thiện Giáp [90] presented a general view of pragmatics when he mentioned a set of different aspects such as context and semantics, information structures, especially discourse and DA. Diệp Quang Ban [86] paid much attention to cohesive devices in Vietnamese texts. Nguyễn Hòa [88] gave a systematic description of discourse and DA both theoretically and practically with specific evidence.

2.3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.3.1.1. Text and Discourse

2.3.1.1. Concepts of Text

Cook [17] mentions “text” as a stretch of language which can be interpreted in its form, outside the context perceived to be meaningful, unified and purposive. Meanwhile, Crystal [17, p.72] states that “*text is a piece of naturally occurring spoken, written, or signed discourse identified for purpose of analysis. It is often a language unit with a definable communicative function, such as a conversation, a poster.*”

Halliday [31, p.12] sees “text” as “a language unit in use. It is not the unit of grammar as the type of a clause or a sentence; and it is not identified in size [...]. A text is best regarded as a semantic unit: a unit not of form, but of meaning”. In short, it is best to consider a text as a semantic unit, rather than a grammatical unit.

In this study, the concept of “text” is understood as a semantic unit of language in written form which is complete in form and structure.

2.3.1.2. Concepts of Discourse

Depending on the definitions, in this thesis we view discourse as follows:

- Discourse is language in use, for communication.
- Discourse is a language unit which has meaning, unity and purpose.
- Discourse may vary in length and is inextricably related to the context which it is used.
- Discourse is a process and its linguistic product is text.

2.3.2. Written and Spoken Discourse

According to Cook [17, p.156], a type of discourse might be characterized as a class of written or spoken text and language in each form has its own functions and characteristics. Chafe [14]

claims that written and spoken language differ because speaking is faster than writing. Brown and Yule [8] suggest that spoken and written discourse serve various functions; the first is used for the establishment and maintenance of human relationships and the second for the working out of and transference of information.

Although many linguists make a distinction between spoken and written discourse, Burgarski [9] remarks that spoken and written language are viewed as separate but that related. The types of discourse dealt with in this thesis belong to written discourses that are well-planned and orderly.

2.3.3 Concepts of Discourse Analysis

Stubbs [77] defines *discourse analysis* as (a) concerned with language use beyond the boundaries of a sentence/utterance, (b) concerned with the interrelationships between language and society and (c) as concerned with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication. Whereas, Nunan asserts that “*discourse analysis*” involves the analysis of the language in use.

Nguyễn Hoà [89] considered *discourse analysis* as a study of how and for what purposes language is used in a certain context and the linguistic means to carry out these purposes.

In this thesis the DA of reading passages tries to find out what lexis, syntax and cohesive devices are used to construct this type of discourse.

2.3.4. Cohesion and Coherence in Discourse

2.3.4.1. Coherence

The term “coherence” has been defined in various ways. Palmer [66] (cited in Nguyen Hoa [89]) states that coherence refers to the rhetorical devices, to ways of writing and speaking that bring

about order and unity and emphasis. Coherence is the factor that decides whether a language product is a text or not (Beaugrande, [5]). It is the semantic, implicit relation inside the text itself. Coherence can be also attained via context Halliday [29, p.23], Brown and Yule [8, p.14], inference, relevance Johns [42, p.103], specific or shared knowledge Cook [17, p.32]. Meanwhile, Nunan [62, p.21] mentions how coherent texts are. He claims that coherent texts are sequences of sentences or utterances which seems to be held together and contain what are called texts-forming devices.

From all these above ideas, we can come to a conclusion that coherence has been applied to the concepts and relations underlying its meaning and to some general overall in the text. In other words, coherence has been defined as continuity in meaning and context in a discourse.

2.3.4.2. Cohesion

According Richards and Platt [72], cohesion is the grammatical and/or lexical relationships between different elements of a text. In Vietnamese, Trần Ngọc Thêm [94] categorizes cohesion into two facets: content cohesion and form cohesion. “Content cohesion” is expressed through a system of form cohesion devices and “form cohesion” is embodied in content cohesion. Thus, a cohesion discourse should include these two facets which help to distinguish a discourse from disconnected jumbles.

In this study, I take Halliday and Hassan’s view that cohesion is how words and expressions are connected using cohesive devices which can be categorized into five groups: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. However, cohesion in our thesis does not merely base on Halliday and Hasan’s classification,

the classification of cohesion in Nguyễn Hòa [19] is also taken into consideration. Nguyễn Hoà divides cohesion into 3 types-grammatical cohesion, lexical cohesion and logical cohesion. Noticeably, in logical cohesion, Nguyễn Hoà has mentioned “transition” device which is used preferably in our samples. Hence, the combination of cohesive devices is the best way to analyze the reading passages in HSCETs.

2.3.5. Reading Comprehension

There have been different definitions of reading comprehension so far. Reading comprehension techniques for improving student’s success in extracting useful knowledge from text (Mayer [55, p.34]). As defined by McShane [54], reading comprehension is understanding a text that is read, or the process of “constructing meaning” from text. Comprehension is a “construction process” because it involves all of the elements of the reading process working together as a text is read to create a representation of the text in the reader’s mind. Besides, according to Lenz [49], reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from text. The goal of all reading instruction of ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend text. Reading Comprehension involves at least two people: the reader and the writer. The process of comprehending involves decoding the writer’s words and then using background knowledge to construct an approximate understanding of the writer’s message.

2.3.6 High School Currently- used English Textbooks

In traditional language teaching, the textbook was designed to improve the students’ grammatical competence rather than their communication skills in real life. As a result, students often have

difficulties using what they have learned to communicate in a real situation. In order to help students overcome this problem, a new textbook applying a new approach in English teaching, learner-centred approach, has been resorted to.

To come up with the world trend of English language teaching, Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has carried out the renovation is English teaching method as well as English textbooks, initially at junior high schools and then senior high schools. The new English textbooks for grade 10,11, and 12 came into being in this circumstance. These textbooks are underpinned by a theme-based approach. The purpose of these textbooks is to develop the students’ language skills through a variety of interesting topics. Each unit in this series of textbooks with a specific theme includes the following major activities: Part A- Reading; Part B-Speaking; Part C-Listening; Part D-Writing; Part E-Language Focus and 6 review lessons presented in the form of Test Yourself. At the end of each book is the glossary of vocabulary appearing in each unit that is transcribed and translated into Vietnamese.

2.3.7 Reading Comprehension Passages in High School Currently-used English Textbooks

The reading passages in HSCETs include one or several paragraphs in length from 180 words to 300 words depending on the grade of students. They help students become familiar with the topic of the unit, providing information and data for the whole unit and developing reading skills for students. Each reading comprehension passage is expressed in many different forms such as essay, text, story, letters, small talks, and TV programmers.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.1. OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines the research methods, sample description, data collection, data analysis, research procedures, reliability and validity of the study.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The thesis design is based on the combination of both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative approach is used in describing and analyzing data to find out the distinctive features of reading passages in term of the lexical, grammatical features and cohesion devices. On the contrary, the quantitative approach is useful for determining the occurrence, the percentage of some linguistic devices.

3.3. RESEARCH METHODS

With an aim of achieving the set goal “to find out typical discourse features of reading passages in HSCETs”, it is impossible to use a single method, but several methods are simultaneously employ.

Firstly, the descriptive method is used in order to give a detailed description of some typical discourse feature of reading passages. The descriptive method seems to be the most popular tool in doing any linguistic research since linguistics is by nature a descriptive science. Secondly, the analytic method is also indispensable. By using this method the researcher can clarify and justifies a certain feature of characteristic. In doing an analysis, she

can use arguments, specific examples or relevant issues to support her viewpoint.

In this research paper, we attempt to identify some characteristics of reading passages in the currently used English textbooks at high schools in terms of the lexis, grammar and transition signals.

3.4. SAMPLING

The samples were taken from reading passages in HSCETs. 48 passages have been chosen to be analyzed in this study. Each passage consists about 180-300 words.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

3.5.1. Data Collection

In order to retrieve the data from the source we will have to design an instrument such as a checklist or compilation sheet. The data will be taken from the passages from the current English textbooks for Vietnamese high school students. Firstly, we collect many reading passages needed to be investigated. Secondly, we categorize the reading passages. Finally, we describe those passages.

3.5.2. Data Analysis

On the basic of passage items that have been collected, data analysis is carried out based on the following steps:

Firstly, we pick out all the reading passages appearing in the data source. These reading passages are arranged into six topics (You and me, Education, Community, Nature, Recreation, People and places)

Secondly, we find out and describe the grammatical features commonly used in these passages.

Then, we identify and depict lexical features of these passages.

Finally, we find out and describe the transition signals used in these passages.

3.6. RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This study is planned and carried out on the basis of a descriptive analysis which mainly concentrates on the lexical, grammatical features and cohesive devices of reading passages. The following steps will be included:

- Collecting all the reading passages in the HSCETs.
- Sorting them out into 6 topics for analysis.
- Analyzing data: Reading passages are analyzed in terms of grammatical features, lexical features and cohesive devices to give out the frequencies of occurrence.
- Synthesizing, discussing the findings and drawing conclusions.
- Suggesting some implications for teaching and learning English as well as reading passages.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we show the results of analyzing data of reading passages in high school currently-used English textbooks (HSCETs) in terms of grammatical features, lexical features and cohesive devices to give out the frequencies of occurrence.

4.2. GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF READING PASSAGES IN HSCETs

4.2.1. Types of Sentences

In English, there are four types of sentences: simple, compound, complex and compound-complex. However, in reading passages in HSCETs, there are three types of commonly used sentences which are **simple sentences**, **compound sentences** and **complex sentences**

4.2.1.1. Simple Sentences

Lee and Kelly [48] states that simple sentences, the most basic sentences in the English language, can be exceptionally useful and powerful. Some of the greatest statements in literature have been presented in the simple sentence.

(4.1) *At 2:30 in the afternoon we go to the field again. We repair the banks of our plot of land.*[91, p.13] (**basic simple sentences**)

4.2.1.2. Compound Sentences

Lee and Kelly [48] say that one reason to write compound sentences is to show that a special relationship exists between the two or more sentences that it is composed of. We know that a compound

sentence may be long or short. It has two or more complete subjects and two or more complete predicates.

(4.5) *Tet's preparations and celebrations used to be spread over months, but nowadays the holiday is much shorter.* [92, p.91]

4.2.1.3. Complex Sentences

This kind of sentences consists of one main independent clause and one or more subordinate or dependent clauses. The dependent clauses are usually relative clauses, nominal that clauses or adverbial clauses.

(4.9) *Endangered species are plant and animal species which are in danger of extinction.* [87, p.107]

(4.13) *When I got home, I showed it to my father.* [91, p.23]

(4.22) *Their parents realized that the young teacher was making great efforts to help their poor kids.* [91, p.45]

4.2.2 Passive Voice in HSCTEs

Admittedly, the active voice has, so far, been the dominant voice in English at large. However, there is general agreement that the passive is particularly useful (even recommended) in certain circumstances. As stated by Quirk [69, p.166], the passive is more commonly used in informative than in imaginative writing, and is notably frequent in the objective, impersonal style of reading passages.

For example:

(4.27) *The competition **was sponsored** by the Students' Parents Society.* [91, p.67]

4.2.3. Comparative Constructions

The comparative and superlative forms are commonly found in reading passages of HSCETs. An overview of the data from 48

reading passages occurs in HSCETs gives evidence that there are great differences in the distribution of comparison.

In order to compare and contrast different objects in English, the comparative and superlative forms are used in reading passages. For example:

(4.33) *The Americans are much **more** concerned **than** the Indians.* [93, p.21]

4.2.4. Tenses

A tense is a grammatical category that locates a situation in time, to indicate when the situation takes place. Some typical tenses are *present, past and perfect*, and *future*.

For example:

(4.39) *Among the women who **do not think** they **have** to many children, half of them **do not want** any more.* [92, p.81]

(4.42) *I **didn't want** to make a fuss, so I **decided** just to take my money back from the school's bag, without saying a word about it.* [92, p.23]

(4.50) *We **will be living** in a much cleaner environment, breathing fresher air and eating healthier foods.* [93, p.85]

4.3 LEXICAL FEATURES OF READING PASSAGES IN HSCETs

4.3.1. Word Formations

Most of knowledge about word formation in HSCETs for grade 10,11 and 12 is about *compound nouns, compound adjectives* and *words formed by prefixes and suffixes*.

Words formed by suffixes are words which have suffixes attached to the end of words to form new words or to alter the grammatical function of the original words.

Words formed by prefixes are words which have prefixes added before words or base to alter their meaning and form new words.

A **compound noun** is a noun that is made up of two or more words. Most compound nouns in HSCETs are formed by nouns modified by other *nouns* or *adjectives*.

A **compound adjective** is formed when two or more adjectives work together to modify the same noun. Mostly, the *compound adjectives* in HSCETs are formed by *adverb + participle*.

4.3.2. Words in Theme

Words in theme are lists of words (with pictures) about certain topics. The themes make it easy to find groups of words that are related.

The words in the reading passages in HSCETs were built under six themes, namely: **You and me, Education, Community, Nature , Recreation, People and Places**. Each word in theme includes several topics. Through these themes, students can participate in a positive, proactive and creative action in the process of forming and developing communicative skills. Moreover, it helps the students learn more deeply, practice more and remember more, and so the reader will have better understanding.

4.3.3. Acronyms

It is clear that a large number of abbreviations appear in reading passages in HSCETs. However, the majority of abbreviations are acronyms. Based on the collected reading passages, some acronyms are found in HSCETs. They can be divided into two groups:

a) Acronyms with High Frequency

This group contains common acronyms that appear in many fields such as education, economy, society, polity. Here are just a few of them:

AIDS : Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

ASEAN : The Association of Southeast Asian Nations

GDP : Gross Domestic Product

FIFA : Federation Internationale de Football Association

b) Acronyms with Low Frequency

This group includes acronyms that often appear in texts, passages or books about daily life. Some of them are:

PhD : Doctor of Philosophy

CD : Compact Disk

B.C : Before Christ

EMS : Express Mail Service

4.3.4. Expressions of Time, Places and purposes

In reading passages of HSCETs, there are a lot of expressions of *time, places, and purposes*.

Here are some examples:

(4.94) *Fifty years ago, Rosa and Luis got married. Today their family and friends are giving them a party.* [92, p.33]

(4.96) *I teach English at Chu van An High School. It is one of the biggest schools in Hanoi.* [91, p.22]

(4.99) *I always tell my grandchildren to study harder so that they can do even more for the village than their parents did.*

[91, p.83]

4.3.5. Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that can replace a noun. The writers use pronouns to make their sentences less cumbersome and less repetitive. As stated by Pyle [68 p.67], the forms of pronouns in English are: *subjective pronouns*, *objective pronouns* (complement pronouns), *possessive pronouns*, and *reflexive pronouns*. According to Clive [16], possessive pronouns can be regarded as personal pronouns in the genitive case. There are two sets of possessive forms: *possessive pronominal pronouns* and *possessive substitutional pronouns*. Therefore, pronouns in HSCETs are presented under these five main forms.

4.4. COHESIVE DEVICES

4.4.1. Lexical Reiteration

With regard to the semantic tie we need to focus on the reiteration of lexical items which is known as the main kind of lexical cohesion. For the sake of unity in analysis, only three categories of reiteration are exploited. They are repetition, synonym or near-synonym, and super-ordinate.

For example:

(4.114) *Plan and animal extinction leads to a loss of **biodiversity**. Maintaining **biodiversity** is important for us in many ways.* [93, p.107]

(4.115) *Like other teacher, **Pham Thu Thuy** enjoys her teaching job.*

*Their parents realized that **the young teacher** was making great efforts to help their poor kids.* [91, p.44-45]

(4.119) *Others say that we must limit population growth because our **resources** are limited...*

*There are also limits to the amounts of **petroleum, iron, silver, gold, and other metals**.* [92, p.81]

4.4.2. Reference Words

Halliday and Hassan [31] point out that reference is the specific nature of information that is signaled for retrieval and the cohesion lies in the continuity of reference, whereby the same thing enters the discourse the second time. Also for them, only endophoric reference makes a contribution to the cohesion because it makes ties within the text.

a) The Use of Personal Reference in HSCETs

According to Halliday and Hassan [31], personal reference is classified into three categories: *personal pronouns*, *possessive determiners*, and *possessive pronouns*.

(4.125) *Fifty years ago, Rosa and Luis got married. Today **their** family and friends are giving **them** a party.* [92, p.33]

b) The Use of Demonstrative Reference in HSCETs

As mentioned in chapter 2, **demonstrative reference** involves the use of the **determiners** “*this, that, these, those*”, the **definite article** “*the*” and **adverbs** “*here, there, now, then*”.

(4.129) *Besides the ordinary telephone call service, our Post Office provides the **Messenger Call Service**. **This** service helps you to notify the recipient of the time and place to receive the call.*

[92, p.101]

c) The Use of Comparative Reference in HSCETs

Comparative reference refers to expressing the identity, similarity, or difference between things.

(4.133). *We will also be **better** looked after by a **more** modern medical system.* [93, p.85]

4.4.3. Transition Signals

As stated by Oshima and Hogue [65, p.39], “*using transition signals is regarded as one way to achieve coherence*”. According to Oshima and Hogue [65, p.42], transition signals can be divided into four groups. They are *sentence connectors* (including transition phrases and conjunctive adverbs), *coordinating conjunctions*, *subordinating conjunctions* and a *mixed group*. These authors [65, p.44-45] view that coordinating conjunctions and subordinating ones are parts of *clause connectors*. In the discourse of reading passages in HSCETs, sentence connectors and clause connectors are used as transition signals

Here are some examples:

(4.130) *After the tragic death of Pierre Curie in 1906, she took up the position which her husband had obtained at the Sorbonne. Thus, she was the first woman in France to be a university professor..* [91, p.33]

(4.132) *Suppose you are at the airport, and you see your brother get off the plane and begin walking toward you.* [93, p.31]

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

Discourse analysis deals with how texts are shaped beyond the sentence level. With the aim of investigating some typical features of reading passages in HSCETs, we set up major goals for the thesis: investigate and find out the grammatical features, lexical features and cohesive devices.

Grammatically, we have found some typical features. Firstly, the complex sentence is often used to clarify or illustrate ideas. Secondly, the writers tend to use the passive voice to emphasize an object in the passage. Next is the use of comparative constructions. The final feature is that the use of tenses. It helps students study the using of tenses more effectively and clearly.

Lexically, some features are found in reading passages in HSCETs. Firstly, word formation is used to know how to create a new word. Secondly, theme words are also mentioned. Through theme words, students can understand the content of the passages more exactly. Thirdly, a large number of acronyms are found to make the passages briefer. Next, the use of expressions of time, places and purposes aims to mark a certain period, a position and the purposes. Lastly, pronouns are also commonly used in HSCETs in order to make the sentences less cumbersome and less repetitive.

What is more, with regard to the cohesive devices used in the discourse of reading passages in HSCETs, we have found some popular means of cohesion. Firstly, lexical reiteration is inevitably used to show cohesion with the topic. It is necessary for writers to orientate all sentences towards one object or a certain event. Secondly, discourse reference is used as an important cohesive

device. It is used to avoid word repetition and to make the discourse of reading passages more concise and more cohesive. Thirdly, using transition signals is regarded as one way to achieve coherence. The transition signals help the readers find it easier to follow the writers' ideas.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

On carrying out this research, I do hoping this research can be the map for our journey toward a better understanding the features of the genre of reading passages in English in the light of discourse analysis in general. It is our hope that this thesis might contribute a small part to the field of teaching and learning English to Vietnamese learners.

Firstly, it is necessary to raise students' awareness of the important of mastering linguistic features at the discourse level. Specifically, it is strongly recommended that whenever asking students to read a passage in textbook, a teacher should introduce clearly on the topic of the paragraph. In the paragraph, the words of it is depended on the topic. By reading, students can rely on the topic to guess the meaning of the words. When the meaning of the key words are clear, the students can understand the paragraph.

Secondly, the findings are also of great help in teaching the reading skill because if the teacher is highly aware of linguistic devices as well as coherent arrangement he/ she can help students understand the passages in a logical and smooth way. Therefore, the features of reading passages in the HSCETs are also great hints with which teachers can give to their students as they practice their reading skill. Besides, the findings of the thesis are the discourse features of reading passages in HSCETs namely: vocabulary, grammar as well as cohesive devices. Therefore, if Vietnamese

students master the discourse features of reading passage in HSCETs, they can understand these reading passages more thoroughly. And above all, studying a language does not mean only studying the vocabulary or a system of grammar.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

The thesis has been completed with my greatest effort and to the best of our knowledge and understanding. However, mistakes and inadequacies seem to be unavoidable because we do not have enough time. Besides, my reference materials are English textbooks in high schools and the authors are all Vietnamese. Therefore, the language is not native English.

Furthermore, the limited ability of the researcher can also been counted as another constraint facing the research. For these limitations, I would be very grateful to receive any comments from teachers and friends, hoping to make the research a truly better ones.

5.4. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As mentioned in the scope of the study, the thesis is discourse analysis of reading passages in the new set of English textbooks for High Schools students, representatively in 91,11 and 12. There are still some wider aspects in HSCETs left unsolved that need further study:

- An investigation into grammatical features in the "Language Focus" sections in HSCETs.
- An investigation into the titles of reading passages in HSCETs.

The author hopes that the suggestions for further study will not only make a contribution to English teaching but also motivate students to have a close look at the target culture.