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**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SPEECHES
 DELIVERED BY GUEST SPEAKERS
 AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES
 IN US COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. RATIONALE

Language is the most effective and practical means of communication. It is really a master key in all fields of society. It is used everyday in many ways and to meet countless different ends. People use language to exchange information, to tell someone something, to ask a question, and to make notes to themselves. People use language to convey a feeling, to express their thoughts, their ideas or their opinions. People use language to encourage, congratulate or comfort their friends, their relatives, etc.

Nowadays, with the development of the society, speeches occur in almost every field of our life. Speeches which are known as spoken texts are indispensable for any seminars, workshops or any other ceremonies. We can easily see many types of speeches in our daily life such as informative speeches, acceptance speeches, and retirement speeches. Especially in the United States of America, speeches delivered at graduation ceremonies - graduation speeches - are never absent in commencement ceremonies. In graduation speeches, the writers show their opinions as well as attitudes toward the audience. In fact, it is not easy to make a good speech that is appropriate to various audiences. In order to produce a fascinating and persuasive speech, one must master the writing skill as well as know how to organize and develop their writing. Besides, the cohesive devices, lexical choices and syntactic features are also important to make a good speech.

Let us take an example in the graduation speech of the US president, Barrack Obama, at the University of Michigan Commencement (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/05/01/obama-michigan-graduation_n_559688.html) which consists of such impressing sentences as :

(1) *Some of these letters tell stories of heartache and struggle. Some Ø express gratitude, and some Ø express anger. Some Ø call me an idiot, which is how you know I'm getting a good sample. And some of the letters make you think, like the one I received last month from a kindergarten class in Virginia.*

(2) *American politics has never been a particularly nice business - and it's always been a little less gentle during times of great change*

(3) *Government is the police officers who are here protecting us and the service men and women who are defending us abroad. Government is the roads you drove in on and the speed limits that kept you safe. Government is what ensures that mines adhere to safety standards and that oil spills are cleaned up by the companies that caused them. Government is this extraordinary public university - a place that is doing life-saving research, catalyzing economic growth, and graduating students who will change the world around them in ways big and small.*

In extract (1), the writer used grammatical cohesion – ellipsis – to make the sentences more coherent. “**Some**” refers to some (other) letters, which is a case of nominal ellipsis in which the head noun is omitted.

In extract (2), the writer exploited a stylistic device. It is the metaphor for politics as human beings when he described it with the adjectives **nice**, **gentle**.

In extract (3) the writer used parallelism which is a powerful rhetorical device to convince listeners, and a device for keeping the listeners on track.

There are so many interesting things that need to be studied in graduation speeches. It is hoped that the findings of this study would provide some useful information about the linguistic features of English

graduation speeches in terms of layout features, lexical and syntactic features in English. Therefore, I choose to do research on the topic "A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SPEECHES DELIVERED BY GUEST SPEAKERS AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES IN US COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES". In addition, this study might contribute a small part to the learning and teaching of the English writing skill.

1.2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.2.1. Aims

This paper is aimed to:

- Find out the typical discourse features of English speeches delivered by guest speakers at Graduation Ceremonies in US colleges and universities – English Graduation Speeches (EGSs)
- Provide Vietnamese learners of English with some useful information about the writing of English speeches.

1.2.2. Objectives

This paper is designed to aim at the following objectives:

- To identify and describe the layout features of EGSs.
- To find out the lexical features, syntactic features and cohesive devices in EGSs
- To suggest some implications for the teaching and learning English in Vietnam, especially the writing skill.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the research questions below will be addressed.

1. What are the layout features of EGSs?
2. What are the lexical features, syntactic structures and cohesive devices of EGSs?
3. What are some suggestions for teaching of English to Vietnamese learners?

1.4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Speeches occur in almost every field of our life. A graduation ceremony often begins with a speech or an address. The study is confined to the investigation of some discourse features of graduation speeches. The scope of the study is just limited to the analysis of formal speeches delivered by guest speakers at graduation ceremonies in US colleges and universities. What we want to do is to focus on the layout, lexical features, syntactic features, and the cohesion of speeches at graduation ceremonies in US colleges and universities.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Speeches are indispensable for any seminars, workshops or ceremonies, especially graduation speeches for commencement ceremonies. This study – A discourse analysis of EL speeches delivered by guest speakers at graduation ceremonies in US colleges and universities - is just an attempt to find out the typical discourse characteristics of graduation speeches in terms of their layout, lexical features, syntactic structures and cohesive devices. It is hoped to contribute to the process of learning and teaching English, especially when we have to deal with ways to write a speech.

1.6. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The thesis consists of 5 chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Implications

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.2.1. Text

2.2.1.1. Concept of Text

2.2.1.2. Features of Text

2.2.2. Discourse & Discourse Analysis

2.2.2.1. Concept of Discourse

2.2.2.2. Concept of Discourse Analysis

2.2.3. Written and Spoken Discourse

2.2.4. Formal and Informal Discourse

2.2.5. Cohesion and Coherence

2.2.5.1. Cohesion

2.2.5.2. Coherence

2.2.6. Graduation Speeches

2.3. SUMMARY

This chapter reviews the previous studies as well as theories relevant to the study. The focus of the study is on the discourse analysis of EGSs so the concept of discourse analysis, text, cohesion, and coherence are included in this chapter. I have chosen the viewpoints of some linguists such as Cook [4], Halliday and Hasan [7], Nunan [17], Widdowson [28] to orient and clarify for the analysis of the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is based on the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

3.2. RESEARCH METHODS

It is impossible to use a single method, but several methods are simultaneously employed.

Firstly, the descriptive method is used in order to give a detailed description of some typical discourse features of EGSs.

Secondly, the analytic method is also essential in this research. By using this method the researcher can clarify and justify a certain feature and characteristic.

Thirdly, inductive and reductive methods are inevitable.

In summary, together with the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, a number of methods as mentioned above are guidelines in conducting the research. However, depending on the set goals of the thesis, descriptive and comparative methods are chosen as the dominant ones which are most frequently used in the thesis.

3.3. SAMPLING

The samples are taken from the English speeches delivered by guest speakers at graduation ceremonies in US universities. I collect 80 graduation speeches from the year 2000 to 2011 for the corpus.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION

In this study, graduation speeches selected for the analysis are in the form of written texts on the Internet. Most of the data in this study are taken from speeches by guest speakers at graduation ceremonies in US colleges and universities such as the US presidents, Michelle Obama, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Tony Snow, Elias A. Zerhouni, Meryl Streep, Yvonne Thornton, Oprah Winfrey ...

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

After collecting the data, I examine and describe them. The graduation speeches are analyzed in terms of their layout, lexical features, syntactic structure, and cohesive devices. Here are the specific tasks:

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Since the graduation speeches collected from active websites for this study are a totally authentic source of data, not invented examples, the quality of the data is quite reliable. These data are not out-of-date (from the year 2000 to 2011). Additionally, in this study, the researcher sets out her work from the analysis of evidence, statistics, frequencies, then comes to conclusions; so she is not driven by the set results. In other words, the objectivity of study is assured.

The results of study, on the one hand, provide some theoretical background for studying one type of discourse; on the other hand, it makes a contribution to the learning and teaching of English. Thus, the research result is significant not only in theory but also in actual practice.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. LAYOUT FEATURES OF ENGLISH GRADUATION SPEECHES

Layout is identified as the way in which the parts of something are arranged, and the layout of a graduation speech is the way in which the writer arranges and organizes the parts or ideas in the discourse of the graduation speech. Undoubtedly, a graduation speech, a written text used for a communicative process, has its overall structure or layout.

Basically, a general layout for an English graduation speech includes three sections, which are:

Introduction Section

Body Section

Conclusion Section

4.1.1. Introduction Section (IS)

The **Introduction Section** in EGSSs usually consists of the following contents or subsections: greetings, thanking, congratulation, the speaker's emotion and the meaning of events. A study in 80 samples shows specific results in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Contents in the Introduction Section of EGSSs

Contents	Greeting	Thanking	Congratulation	Emotion	Significance
Occurrence	46	64	35	50	19
%	57.5%	80%	43.75%	62.5%	23.75%

Greeting and *Thanking* are the pair of contents usually appear in the IS, whereas *emotion* and *significance* occur irregularly with the above pair. Few EGSSs include all five contents.

Greeting: The procedure of greeting just made at the beginning of the speech account for 57.5%. 40% of the speeches have specific greeting to participants with high social positions first and then to all

the rest participants. 17.5 % of the speeches have general greetings sent to all participants.

(4.1) President Faust, members of the Harvard Corporation and the Board of Overseers, members of the faculty, proud parents, and, above all, graduates.[46]

Thanking: The procedure of thanking appearing in the IS of the speech account for 80%. EGSs contain thanks for the chairman's invitation to deliver the speech. Besides, the speakers may say thanks to the participants who have great contribution to the commencement ceremony.

(4.11) Thank you President Powers for that wonderful introduction and for giving me this opportunity and honor to give the commencement speech. [66]

Congratulations: 43.75% of EGSs include congratulations for the graduates or their parents in the IS. This content often follows the act *thanking* or *greeting*.

(4.13) I'm talking about just celebrating the great accomplishment. So let me congratulate the Trojan class of 2009 on your graduation from one of the finest universities in the world. Let's give our

Significance: 23.75% of EGSs state the significance of the event in the introduction section.

(4.18) This is a wonderful day for all of you, as you mark the end of one great effort and the beginning of another.[64]

Emotion: The percentage of *emotion* in the IS is 62.5%. By expressing his emotion, the speaker would like to capture the attention of listeners and specify the purpose and the subject of the speech.

(4.21) I am honored that you chose me to help you celebrate your graduation today. I'm truly, truly delighted to be here at Harvard.[1]

4.1.2. Body Section (BS)

Based on the analyzing results, The body section (BS) of EGSs contains three key points in the Past, Present, and Future.

The first key point is referred to the past. The speaker shares and reflects upon his personal experiences, or personal recollections. The example below will illustrate this.

(4.24) I want to start with a lesson that I learned the hard way. When I was in high school I was a pretty guy.... But to be honest, I'm glad I went through it, because a funny thing happened along the way back from the precipice: Nearly losing my life made me want to live my life. [64]

The second key point is referred to the present. By sharing his personal experience, the speaker draws some lessons and gives some advice, or speaker might suggest some personal principles to live up to. Here is the lesson drawn from the experience in example (4.24)

(4.25) So the first lesson I'd impart is this: Don't be reckless with what you've been given. Take what you do and how you live your life seriously.... I knew I wanted to make something of myself and make a difference in this world. [64]

The third key point is referred to the future. For instance:

(4.26) Not all of you will become teachers like Michelle Shearer, or start a teacher corps like Wendy Kopp, The stakes have never been higher, nor the moment more urgent, for millions of young Americans and the nation as a whole.

In fact, the body section is the main part of EGSs. It contains the messages of the speakers to the graduates

4.1.3. Conclusion Section (CS)

The conclusion section (CS) is the final part in a speech. It should be brief and give the speech a sense of closure and completion.

Table 4.2 Contents in the Conclusion Section of EGSSs

Contents	Thanks	Hopes	Wishes	Congratulation
Occurrence	54	25	44	42
%	67.5%	31.25%	55%	52.5%

Thanks:

67.5% of EGSSs have the act of *thanking* in the CS, thank for the invitation to the commencement, thank the audience for listening to their speeches and thank people who help him to be successful in his life.

(4.27) *Thank you for asking me to be here. Thank you for already having done the hard work that got you here, and please enjoy this moment.* [63]

Hopes: Expressing *hopes* occurs 31.25. *Hoping* is usually before *wishing*.

(4.29) *This was my message. Believe in yourself. Life sciences are a great challenge. We have a lot to do, and I hope you'll join us in this fight.* [27]

Wishes: The act of wishing accounts for 55% in the CS of EGSSs. *Wishing* in EGSSs is to wish the audience for something

(4.34) *I wish you all happiness, the courage to meet life's many challenges, and the experience of success, both individually and as a member of an organizational team.* [25]

(4.35) *I wish you Godspeed and every blessing on the road ahead.* [55]

Congratulations: Congratulations in EGSSs occur 52.5%.

(4.37) *Congratulations to the Members of the Class of 2008.* [49]

Sometimes the writers conclude his/ her speech by a few inspirational quotes. The quote might be from a song, a poem or from a book that the speaker would like to send to the audience. For example:

(4.39) *"There is hope for a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that its tender branch will not cease."* [12]

4.2. LEXICAL FEATURES

Graduation speeches are an important part of graduation ceremonies. A graduation speech should be memorable for its energizing words, not forgettable because of its dullness. In order to give a good graduation speech, the writers have to choose and use the words appropriately.

4.2.1. Verbs denoting encouragement in EGSSs

A graduation speech by a guest speaker is a chance to make a very positive statement and inspire the graduates for the future. Students will not just be thinking about their achievements but also be waking up to facing the future and maintaining contact with friends. Perhaps the writers want them to be inspired, motivated, feel appreciated and loved. Therefore, using verbs denoting encouragement is frequently found in EGSSs. For instance:

(4.41) [...] *And I encourage all of you, no matter where you go in life, keep doing that - keep honoring our troops and their families.* [58]

(4.43) *But in those moments, those inevitable moments, I urge you to think about this day. Look around you. Look around you.* [54]

The most frequently used verbs denoting encouragement in EGSSs are “*encourage*” with 40 instances, “*inspire*” with 12 instances and “*urge*” with 11 instances.

4.2.2. Most Popular Words Used In EGSSs

There are many inspirational famous speeches made by people in the past and present. Some of these people are still alive, some are not. Nevertheless, their choice of words made their speeches powerful and memorable. Indeed, the words such as *world, life, job, career,*

opportunity, challenge, love, etc. are frequently found in EGSs. For instance:

(4.46) ...*In your own lives, you'll need to continuously adapt to a continuously changing economy: to have more than one job or career over the course of your life; to keep gaining new skills – possibly even new degrees; and to keep taking risks as new opportunities arise.* [8]

The occurrence of some most popular words used in EGSs is tabulated in Table 4.3

Table 4.3 Some most popular words used in EGSs

Number	Words	Occurrence
1.	World	579
2.	Job	218
	Work	534
	Career	103
3.	Economy	66
	Money	86
4.	Joy	57
	Happy	60
5.	Love	184
	Passion	106
6.	Challenge	178
	Opportunity	104
7.	Fear	57
8.	Change	237
9.	Responsibility	58
10.	Faith	72
	God	106
11.	Life	859

4.3. SYNTACTIC FEATURES

In this part the researcher makes an attempt to investigate into some syntactic devices to see how they are used in EGSs. They are imperative sentences, cleft sentences and parallel structures.

4.3.1. Imperative Sentences in EGSs

The imperative is frequently used in everyday speech. Imperatives contain no subject which is implicitly understood as of second person, and are begun with a verb or verb phrase. The construction of the Imperative sentence can be stated as:

<Imperative Sentence> = <predicate> = <verb> <complement>
(IMP)

- (4.49) *Take your risks now* [1]
(4.50) *Trust yourself* [2]

In examples (4.49), (4.50) the speakers would like to encourage the graduates to be more courageous, to be more confident when they enter a new world, a world with many difficulties ahead.

The verb in the Imperative (IMP) is in the base form and IMP can not bear tense and modal. In addition, for emphasis, contrast and negation, IMP requires *do-support*. And it needs do-support even for *have* and *be*. Here are some examples:

(4.51) *So don't let people talk you into doing what's easy or comfortable.* [6]

<Negative Imperative Sentence> = <predicate> = <Don't> <verb> <complement>

Let's look at these examples:

(4.53) *Challenge yourself to pursue the impossible, and you'll go further than you could ever imagine* [52]

The above form is used if a person gives an order, a request to another person or to a group of people. But if the imperative includes oneself in the group of people who receive the order the words "Let us" or "Let's" are added before the infinitive in the sentence.

(4.57) *Let's let our voices return the century and a half of life-transforming energy to these hallowed halls.*[43]

First person inclusive let's, or let us (formally) begins the imperatives and followed by a verb in the plain form with the meaning: *I propose that you and I do something*. In negative form, “not” is put after “Let's” to propose that *you and I should not do something*.

Moreover, in this study, in order to make the audience pay attention to the speech, the speakers use the pattern: *Let me + Bare Infinitive*.

(4.59) *Let me give you an example I learned as a teenager.*[25]

In the examples above, the speakers would like the listeners to take notice of what he/she is going to talk about. It can be seen in the examples that the topics or the problems he/she is going to present.

The use of Imperative Sentence in EGSSs is tabulated as follows:

Table 4. 4 Imperative Sentence in EGSSs

IMPERATIVE	Occurrence	Rate
Affirmative	375	74.55%
Negative	108	21.47%
Let's	20	3.98%
Total	503	100%

Imperative utterances perform a rich variety of discourse functions and speech acts in everyday conversation. The imperative in English is used to give an order, a warning, an appeal, an advice, a suggestion, an instruction and in some cases a request to another person, to a group of people or to animals. Here are some pieces of advice the speakers give to the graduates.

(4.65) *Always aim high. Don't settle for what you know you can accomplish. Challenge yourself to pursue the impossible, and you'll go further than you could ever imagine.* [52]

In brief, graduation speeches are delivered to congratulate the graduates, their parents and the faculty. So a lot of advice is given to the new graduates and Imperative Sentence is one of the most effective ways to give advice.

4.3.2. Cleft Sentences in EGSSs

Cleft Sentence is a grammatical device associated with information focus: it enables the users to select which element of the sentence will be emphasized or highlighted. The cleft sentence is divided into two main parts: an initial focal element, followed by a ‘background’ structure which resembles a relative clause (Quirk, 1985:89)

A cleft sentence can be defined as a complex sentence which contains two clauses. In English the prototypical cleft sentence has the following form:

It + Be + Focal Element +Subordinate Clause

Here are some examples in which cleft sentences are used in EGSSs.

(4.66) *It was the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln, who said that the role of government is to do for the people what they cannot do better for themselves.* [15]

In this example, the writer would like to make the readers pay more attention to the item “*the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln*” in (4.66), so the cleft sentence with the focus “*the first Republican President, Abraham Lincoln*” and “*an act of liberation*” is used to convey this idea.

According to Quirk (1985), theoretically the focal element in a cleft sentence is not only realized by a noun, noun phrase but also an adjunct realized by a clause or a prepositional phrase. Here are some examples

(4.70) *It was right here, in the waters around us, where the American experiment began.* [5]

There are only 34 instances of cleft sentence that were found in EGSs. And most of the focal elements in EGSs found are noun phrase. Actually, when putting emphasis on some information, more or less attitude of the writer is added to it, which may lead to the lack of objectivity of the speech.

4.3.3. Parallel structures in EGSs

Parallelism is recurrent syntactical similarity. Several parts of a sentence or several sentences are expressed similarly to show that the ideas in the parts or sentences are equal in importance. For example

(4.73) *We can try to build walls around us, and we can look inward, and we can respond by being frightened and angry about those disruptions.* [5]

In grammar, parallelism is a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses. As shown in the above example, in (4.73) parallel structures are made up at clause level. At lower level of parallel, word balancing with word appears popularly: adjectives with adjectives, nouns with nouns and verbs with verbs below.

(4.76) *Friends, Romans, countrymen: lend me your beers.* [1]

Parallelism appears in most of the EGSs, especially parallel structure at sentence levels. It creates a fair value of emphasizing the similarity and equating the significance of the parts, for instance:

(4.78) [...] *It undermines democratic deliberation. It prevents learning - since after all, why should we listen to a "fascist" or "socialist" or "right wing nut?" It makes it It coarsens our culture, and at its worst, it can send signals to the most extreme elements of our society that perhaps violence is a justifiable response.* [15]

The sentences in (4.78) share a similar syntactical structure: *S+V (simple Present) + O.* The subject **It** in (4.78) and they make up

the whole sentence and the paragraph valuable and successive to attract the audience's attention.

In summary, the application of parallelism in sentence construction can sometimes improve writing style. It adds balance and rhythm and, most importantly, clarity to the sentence. Therefore, the sentences in the writing will flow smoothly.

4.4. COHESIVE DEVICES

4.4.1. Reference in EGSs

The use of reference as a cohesive device is tabulated in Table 4.5

Table 4.5. Reference in EGSs

Types of Reference		Occurrence	Rate
Personal	Personal pronoun	14,335	49.9%
	Possessive pronoun	5,322	18.53%
	Possessive determiner	57	0.2%
	Total	19,714	68.63%
Demonstrative	Determiner	6,030	21%
	Adverb	1,715	5.97%
	Total	7,745	26.97%
Comparative	General	340	1.18%
	Particular	924	3.22%
	Total	1,264	4.40%
Total of Reference		28,723	100%

It can be seen from the table above that personal reference is found in EGSs in three categories: *Personal pronoun*, *Possessive pronoun* and *Possessive determiner*. It takes the largest proportion (68.63%) with 19,714 instances. For example:

(4.80) *Norman Francis has helped make today's miracle because he has seen miracles at work in his own life.* [12]

In addition, demonstrative determiners “*this, that, these, those*” and demonstrative adverbs “*here, there, now, then*” are used (26.97%) to make the relationships between sentences. For example:

(4.81) *All I can tell you today is what I have learned. What I have discovered as a person in this world. And that is this: you can't do it alone. As you navigate through the rest of your life, be open to collaboration. Other people and other people's ideas are often better than your own.* [1]

Meanwhile, comparative reference refers to expressing the identity, similarity, or difference between things (*general comparative*) and expressing a qualitative or quantitative comparison (*particular comparative*)

However, using comparative forms may bring the great values in making textual cohesion as well as impress audience much. For example:

(4.84) [...] *we've chosen again and again to make America bigger, bolder, more diverse, more generous, more hopeful.* [13]

(4.85) *Maybe you've got a family to raise, and are wondering how you'll ensure that your kids have the same opportunities you've had to get an education and pursue their dreams.* [8]

It can be seen from the table above that particular comparative as *bigger, bolder, more diverse,...* are more commonly used (924 instances) than general comparative as *same, similar,...* (340 instances).

4.4.2. Substitution in EGSs

Substitution is the grammatical relation in which one item is replaced by another. The use of substitution as a cohesive device is tabulated in the table below:

Table 4.6. Substitution in EGSs

SUBSTITUTION	Type	Occurrence	Rate
Nominal	232	48.23%	
Verbal	217	45.12%	
Clausal	32	6.65%	
Total		481	100%

Here are some examples of substitution from the corpus:

(4.88) *No one had any expectations for us, except our parents who believed in us when no one else did.* [80]

(4.90) *If my sisters and I, who were written off because we were dark-skinned Black women, can rise to levels of success against all odds, so can you.* [80]

4.4.3. Ellipsis in EGSs

Ellipsis is a special case of substitution. However the difference between substitution and ellipsis is that in the former a substitution counter occurs in the slot and this must be deleted if the presupposed item is replaced, whereas in the latter the slot is empty- there has been substitution by zero.

Table 4.7. Type of Ellipsis in EGSs

ELLIPSIS	Type	Occurrence	Rate
Nominal	65	57.01%	
Verbal	37	32.46%	
Clausal	12	10.53%	
Total		114	100%

Here are an example of ellipsis:

(4.92) *I bring this up because today, you are about to enter a world that makes it easy to get caught up in the notion that there are actually two different stories at work in our lives. The first Ø is the story of our everyday cares and concerns – the responsibilities we have to our jobs and our families – the bustle and busyness of what happens*

in our own life. And **the second Ø** is the story of what happens in the life of our country – of what happens in the wider world. [7]

In extract (4.92), the writer used grammatical cohesion – ellipsis- to make the sentences more coherent. “**The first**” and “**the second**” refer to the “**two different stories**”, which is a case of nominal ellipsis in which the head noun is omitted.

4.4.4. Repetition in EGSs

Repetition is one of the common stylistic devices that make the discourse of EGSs more cohesive. It is the repeating exactly a lexical items mentioned previously in the text. The purpose of repetition is to emphasize important information and to draw the attention from audience. Here are an example:

(4.94) *Courage will be required of you on many fronts. Have the courage to seek the truth, Have the courage to love fearlessly and unconditionally, and don't compromise that love because of arrogance or insecurity. And have the courage to accept that you're not perfect, nothing is, and no one is — and that's OK.* [48]

As can be seen from the corpus, repetition appears in a lot of the EGSs. The words repeated usually nouns, verbs, adjectives or phrases. In (4.94) **Courage** is repeated five times, and “**the truth**”,

In summary, cohesive devices play a crucial role in the establishment coherent discourse. By using cohesive devices properly, the writers can make the text more smoothly and can make great impression on the readers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

Discourse analysis deals with how language is used beyond the sentence level. Aiming at investigating some typical features of English Graduation Speeches, I set up major goals for the thesis: investigate and find out typical features of EGSs in terms of (1) layout, (2) lexical features, (3) syntactic structures and (4) cohesive devices. The findings gained from the analysis of EGSs allow the researcher to come to the following remarks.

In term of the layout features, EGSs contain 3 parts: Introduction Section- Body Section – Conclusion Section. In the IS, EGSs usually have the following contents: *greeting- thanking- congratulation- emotion-significance*. In the BS, , the BS of EGSs contains three key points in the Past, Present, and Future. The order of the contents in the BS is expressed from the past to the present and toward the future. The speaker shares and reflects upon his past experiences or recollections; and now the speaker draws some lessons and gives some advice, or speaker might suggest some personal principles to live up to, then speaker asks the graduates what they should do for their own life and for the society in the future. In the CS, once more time the speaker would like to thank to the audience and the Board of Trustee for the honor to be their commencement ceremony, send the congratulation some wishes and hopes to the graduates.

Words are very important to transfer one's thought to others. Using words incorrectly or inappropriately might cause misunderstanding. Choosing words or lexical for speeches, especially Graduation speeches is more important. The aim of the graduation speech is to congratulate and encourage graduates for the result they have achieved and encourage them to use the knowledge they have to

apply in reality. As regards the lexical features, some verbs denoting encouragement are used to encourage the new graduates. And some words such as *world, life, job, career, opportunity, challenge*, etc. are used frequently in EGSs.

With regard to syntactic features, this study focuses three types of sentence: Imperative sentence, cleft sentence and parallel structure. Imperative sentences are used frequently in EGSs with 503 instances to give advice, and to encourage the graduates. To emphasize and make impression on the audience, the speakers usually use Cleft Sentence and Parallelism.

Finally, cohesion is a linguistic device by which the link between text elements is established and the text is given the unity and coherence. Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis and Repetition are main cohesive devices which are analyzed one after another.

5.2. IMPLICATIONS

It is our hope that this thesis not only makes a benefit for writing successful and persuasive speech but also contributes a small part to the field of teaching and learning English to Vietnamese learners.

Firstly, it is necessary to raise students' awareness of the importance mastering linguistic features at discourse level. Especially, when students are asked to write a piece of writing, teachers should ask them to determine the layout which provides them a frame to develop of the writing in a natural and proper way. It is because each genre of discourse has its own layout. Moreover, discovering discourse of EGSs may help students enrich their knowledge, grammar rules and vocabulary in this field.

Secondly, EGSs is quite new and strange for Vietnamese because there are no graduation speeches delivered by guest speakers in Vietnamese colleges and universities. In addition, studying a language is not only studying the vocabulary or a system of grammar but also finding

the differences in cultures, values embedded in the way people use their language. Therefore, EGSs may be considered a good source for English teaching materials that is suitable for colleges specialized in English. EGSs not only provide the knowledge of linguistics but knowledge of culture to students. Besides, mastering some discourse features of EGSs help students be more aware of writing a coherent text.

Thirdly, the findings of this thesis provide some general features of layout and thus help the teachers a lot in giving students some tips in writing a graduation speech well and persuasively. Moreover, the findings are also of great help in teaching the speaking skill especially public speaking. If the teacher is highly aware of linguistic devices as well as coherent arrangement, he/she can help students to present their ideas in a logical and smooth way. Therefore, the features of English Graduation speeches are also great hints with which teachers can give their students when they practice their writing skill.

5.3. LIMITATIONS

Due to the shortage of time, reference materials as well as the limited knowledge of the researcher, the study can only examine some certain characteristics of EGSs such as the layout, lexical, syntactic features and cohesive devices, so it can not cover all interesting domains.

5.4. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

For the sake of making further investigation into EGSs, I would like to offer some suggestions for further research:

1. An investigation into pragmatic features of English Graduation Speeches.
2. A study on stylistic devices used in English Graduation Speeches.
3. An investigation into the thematisation of English Graduation Speeches.