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Cohesion in Compositions of Turkish and Immigrant Students

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Abstract

Cohesion refers to the relationships established between sentences and paragraphs via the units in the surface structure of the text. This study evaluated texts written by Uzbek origin immigrant students and Turkish students living in Hatay in terms of the use of cohesion devices (ellipsis, conjunctions, lexical cohesion, reference, substitution). Within the participants of the research, 98 immigrants (Uzbek) and 103 Turkish 5'th grade students living in Hatay were asked to write a story. These stories were analyzed by means of "Cohesion Level Evaluation Scale" and "Cohesion Problems Inventory". Students' frequencies of using cohesion devices and the problems encountered in the use of cohesion devices were determined in categorical content analyze. The reliability of codifications was examined with the method of inter-rater reliability. According to the results of the research, no significant difference was found between immigrant and Turkish students in terms of the use frequencies of cohesion devices other than ellipsis. The average use of cohesion devices within each student (paper) are as follows: Ellipsis (15,4), conjunctions (15,4), lexical cohesion (11,2), reference (8,3), substitution (0,2). The study presents examples of reference, ellipsis and conjunctions from the submitted texts to illustrate typical problems experienced by the Turkish and Uzbek groups in using cohesion devices.

Key Words

Cohesion, Bilingualism, Writing Education, Text Linguistics.

From a linguistic perspective, a text is a series of sentences following one another that forms a sequential and meaningful whole (Günay, 2003). None of the texts consists of random alignment of the sentences relating to a topic. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) identified 7 characteristics necessary for a linguistic work to constitute a text and to form a healthy communication between people. These features are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, stiuationality and inter-textuality.

Cohesion

Among textuality standards, only cohesion and coherence are text-centered (De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). In this sense, cohesion and coherence are textuality principles most frequently used in linguistic text examinations (Coşkun, 2007; Rifat, 1983). Cohesion, which De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) describe as the first standard of textuality, is based on the linguistic relationships between the components in the surface structure of a text (Enkvist, 1990); all of the uses brought out by these linguistic relationships are included in within scope of cohesion. Yue (1993) and Dillon (1992) mention cohesion as a feature ensuring textual continuity and unity and in holding sentences together. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classified devices that ensure cohesion, in their study, *"Cohesion in English"*, which is accepted as one of the principal sources in the literature relating to textual cohesion, and which has been used in many scientific studies around the world (Abu-Hatab, 1992; Altunkaya, 1987; Bae, 2001; Coşkun, 2005; Jin, 1998; Karabağ & İşsever, 1995; Karatay, 2010; Mendoza, 1998; Ramadan, 2003; Said, 1988; Subaşı-Uzun, 1995; Yue, 1993).

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According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesion separates a text from expressions that are not considered a text, holds together the sections of the text and arranges the meaning relationships within a text. A cohesive relationship in the text sometimes appears in a sentence, sometimes between the sentences and sometimes between the paragraphs. Halliday and Hasan (1976) evaluated cohesion under the following titles: a. Reference; b. Substitution; c. Ellipsis; d. Conjunctions; e. Lexical cohesion.

Reference: Reference is made by using another word, group of words or suffix with the same meaning in the same sentence or a subsequent sentence, instead of a word denoting a concept, entity or situation which is used earlier in the same text. The reference prevents expression from continuing unnecessarily and thus enables it to be more comprehensible. The reference is formed in the following ways in Turkish: 1. Pronouns (personal pronouns, reflexive pronouns, demonstrative pronouns and relative pronoun); 2. Demonstrative adjectives; 3. Comparison reference (Coşkun, 2007).

Ellipsis: Ellipsis emerges via the reduction of some expressions repeated in the text without negatively affecting the perception of the reader. The main purpose during this reduction is to simplify the discourse by reducing redundancy within the text (Coşkun, 2007). Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 142) defined ellipsis as "*the thing understood though unsaid in the text*". It is supposed that the points not mentioned and left unattended by the author during ellipsis will be comprehended by the reader through the mentioned points (Göktürk, 1988). This enables the reader to be active during the act of reading. Particularly within poetry, the use of ellipses contributes to generating excitement and enthusiasm among the readers (Günay, 2003). Ellipsis appears sometimes through the reduction of a sentence, sometimes through the reduction of a word or a phrase and sometimes through the reduction of a suffix.

Substitution: Substitution occurs when an element in the text is replaced by another element. The substitution is formed through the use of words such as "aynı" (same), "öyle" (such) and "böyle" (so) in Turkish. If the substituted element is a noun or a noun phrase, it is called nominal substitution; if it is a verb, it is called verbal substitution; and if it is a clause or a sentence, it is called clausal substitution (Coşkun, 2007). According to Altunkaya (1987) and Subaşı-Uzun (1995), nominal and verbal substitution and is used rarely in Turkish. According to Coşkun (2005), substitution structures in English do not have one-to-one counterparts in Turkish, and reference and ellipsis cohesion devices are mostly applied, rather than substitution.

Conjunctions: Conjunctions provide the connection between two different units of the text. Some particles and adverbs also serve to connect in Turkish, in addition to the conjunctions (Subaşı-Uzun, 1990). Some conjunctions have more than one function. Conjunctions in Turkish are classified by Coşkun (2005) as follows: additive, distinctive, contrast, time alignment, condition, explanation, sampling, cause-effect, and effect-cause.

Lexical Cohesion: Halliday and Hasan (1976) handled lexical cohesion under two titles: reiteration and collocation. Reiteration types are as follows:

a. Repetition of the word

b. Use of synonyms or near synonyms

c. Use of superordinate of the word

d. Use of general words

Reiteration refers to the use of a word's synonym, near synonym, superordinate or a general word instead of that word in the text. In collocation is not used instead of the word, but another word or other words related to this word are used together with this word (Coşkun, 2005).

Bilingualism

According to Taylor and Taylor (1990), the term of bilingualism covers the capability to use two languages or two dialects of a language at the same time. In this case, the person uses the standard (dominant) language in communication in formal environments, and uses the local language in the relationship with his or her close environment. When young children leave a language environment and move to an environment in which another language is used, they start to show a decline in their first language and an advance in their second language in approximately 6 months (Coşkun, 2009).

Bilingual education is based on the supposition that learning in a language can be transferred to the second language. During this transfer, difficulties can be experienced in interlinguas interference and some errors can be seen. The act of writing in the second language requires the use of writing techniques, strategies and skills, as in the first language (Coşkun, 2009). Social and cognitive factors impact the writing process in the second language

(Myles, 2002). Activities such as prewriting, brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and cooperative study methods can make great contributions to the writing process in the second language (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower & Hayes, 1980). However, students need more guidance in the act of writing in the second language, due to deficiencies in vocabulary and language structures. This need increases as the level of difference between the first language and second language increases.

Bilingual Immigrant Uzbek Society in Hatay, Turkey

Ovakent, which is located 23 km from the city center of Hatay, is made up of houses built by the state as disaster homes after flooding in 1979. Since there was not enough demand for these disaster homes from local people in that period, immigrants from Afghanistan were settled in this region from 1982 onwards. All of the immigrants continuing to settle in this region from the countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan, as from the first settlement in 1982, are all Uzbek Turks. Approximately 7000 people now live in Ovakent, of which approximately 70% are immigrant Uzbeks. A great majority of the immigrant population is occupied with agriculture and leatherworking.

In Turkey, in the studies of writing education field, the studies, which evaluate the relations with each other of text units and the contribution of these relations to constitute the text, are very few. On the other hand studies done on bilingualism, which is evaluated as an extremely important social problem in many countries and researches were done on it, are limited in Turkey. In this study, written narrations of bilingual Uzbek students and Turkish students were evaluated in terms of cohesion one of textuality principles. In this way it was aimed at both revealing alternative approach in evaluating students' texts and determining the situation of writing skills of bilingual students in Turkey.

Purpose of the Study

While it is seen that knowledge in the field of text linguistics around the world has been reflected in writing education since the 1970s, very few studies of language education in Turkey (Coşkun, 2005, 2009; Çeçen, 2009; Karabağ & İşsever, 1995, Karatay, 2010) have benefited from the use of text linguistics data. It is thought that the present study can demonstrate the way in which text-linguistics data could be applied in writing education.

This study aims at evaluating the texts written by Uzbek origin immigrant students and Turkish students living in Hatay in terms of the use of cohesion devices. The aims of the research are as follows:

In the texts written by immigrant and Turkish students,

a. Is there a significant difference in the level of use of cohesion devices (reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, lexical cohesion)?

b. What kinds of problems are encountered in the use of cohesion devices (reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, lexical cohesion)? How common are these problems?

Method

Research Model

This research is a field research in descriptive scanning model. In the research, texts that migrant and Turkish students wrote were compared in terms of the use of cohesion devices.

Participants

In this research, data collection instruments were applied in two different groups. Purposeful sampling was used in formation of the first group. This group is made up of 98 immigrant students studying in 5th grade in Ovakent Primary School. The second group comprises 103 Turkish 5th grade students chosen from two primary schools in Hatay via random cluster sampling method. The reason why two different sampling methods were used is limitation related to migrant students. Migrant students study only in a school (Ovakent Primary School). So first group of the research consisted of migrant students being among the students that study in fifth grade in Ovakent Primary School.

Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

The study materials comprised of narrative texts written by the participating students. Students were given 5 topics to make it easier for them to write a story. Students chose one of these topics and wrote a story on the papers they were given. Two measurement tools were used in the study. The first tool is "*Cohesion Level Evaluation Scale" (CLES)*, developed by Coşkun (2005). The scale was arranged as a frequency chart to determine the use frequency of cohesion devices within student texts. For the content validity of the CLES in its original

Table 1.
t Test Results Relating to Students' Frequencies of Using Reference Components

Reference Element	Group	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	sd	t
Personal Pronoun	Immigrant	98	5.03	3.94		-0.529
	Turkish	103	5.27	2.26	152.831	
Reflexive Pronoun	Immigrant	98	0.46	1.03		-0.052
	Turkish	103	0.47	0.81	199	
Demonstrative Pronoun	Immigrant	98	0.93	1.07		-0.770
	Turkish	103	1.06	1.30	195.152	
Relative Pronoun	Immigrant	98	0.02	0.14		-0.264
	Turkish	103	0.03	0.29	199	
Demonstrative Adjective	Immigrant	98	1.23	1.15		-1.259
	Turkish	103	1.47	1.44	193.559	
Comparison	Immigrant	98	0.31	0.60		-0.786
	Turkish	103	0.38	0.70	199	
Total	Immigrant	98	7.98	4.56		-1.246
	Turkish	103	8.67	3.12	170.611	

form, literature reviewing and the expert view have been utilized. Beside the relationship between the cohesion scores of the students' narrative texts and their scores from Turkish language course were examined in order to see the predictive validity (r =.74, $p < 0.01$). In order to determine the reliability of the scale, "correlation inter-raters" has been taken into consideration (r = .99, $p < 0.01$).

Categorical content analysis was used to determine the problems that students experienced in the use of cohesion devices. The following method was used in the content analysis: The researcher gave information about cohesion devices and their misuse to a Turkish teacher who was determined as the second coder. Following the theoretical information, the researcher and second coder prepared a *"Cohesion Problems Inventory"* (CPI) chart in order to determine the problems encountered in the use of cohesion devices. the Problems identified in the use of cohesion devices were explained in the CPI with one sentence for each problem (e.g. *use of the reference component without any counterpart*). A frequency mark was put opposite the related article for every problem encountered. When a new problem was identified, the evaluation continued by adding a new sentence to the CPI, explaining the problem.

The researcher and second coder studied together on 10 texts left out of the sample by using CLES and CPI. At this stage, after ensuring agreement between the scoring of both markers, 50 texts from the sample were evaluated independently using CLES and CPI. It was determined in this evaluation that there was a harmony of 96 % in terms of the frequency of cohesion devices and 94 % in terms of the problems relating to the use of cohesion devices between the markers. This was accepted as evidence of the reliability of the CLES and CPI measurement tools.

In the research, the independent samples t test was used to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between cohesion scores of immigrant students and Turkish students, and distribution of cohesion problems was presented with frequency and percentage values in accordance with the data in CPI.

Results

The findings of the study are presented separately for each cohesion device, Table 1.

According to Table 1, the average use of reference components was slightly higher among Turkish students compared to those of the immigrant students. However, the difference between the group averages was not statistically significant in any of the reference elements ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2.
Distribution of Problems Identified in Students' Use of Reference Components

No	Problem	Immigrant (n= 98)		Turkish (n= 103)		Total (N= 201)	
		f	X̄	*f*	X̄	*f*	X̄
1	Use of the reference component without any counterpart	26	0.27	17	0.17	43	0.21
2	Use of the reference component frequently and in an unnecessary way	16	0.16	12	0.12	28	0.14
3	Use of the demonstrative pronoun when it is necessary to use personal pronoun and demonstrative adjective	8	0.08	5	0.05	13	0.06
Total		50	0.51	34	0.33	84	0.42

According to Table 2, the problem most frequently *(f=43)* encountered in the use of reference components is the *"Use of the reference component without any counterpart"*. Frequency level of the 3 types of problems determined in the table was higher among the immigrant students than the Turkish students. According to the evaluation of the total of the problems, the use of problematic reference structures was 0.51 per student among Uzbek students and 0.33 among Turkish students.

From Table 3, it is seen that Turkish students had higher averages in all of the ellipsis types compared to the immigrant students. The results of t tests indicate that there is a significant difference between the groups in terms of the use of sentence ellipsis, component ellipsis and total ellipsis ($p< .001$).

Table 4.
Distribution of Problems Identified in Students' Use of Ellipsis

Problem	Immigrant (n= 98)		Turkish (n= 103)		Total (N= 201)	
	f	X̄	*f*	X̄	*f*	X̄
Use of ellipsis in an inappropriate place	54	0.55	27	0.26	81	0.40

As seen in the Table 4, problems relating to the use of ellipsis are encountered more often in texts written by the immigrant students.

Table 5.
t Test Results for Students' Frequencies of Using Substitution

Substitution Type	Group	n	X̄	ss	sd	t
Nominal Substitution	Immigrant	98	0.02	0.142	199	-0.765
	Turkish	103	0.04	0.194		
Verbal Substitution	Immigrant	98	0.07	0.296	199	-0.369
	Turkish	103	0.09	0.316		
Clausal Substitution	Immigrant	98	0.13	0.341	199	0.345
	Turkish	103	0.12	0.322		
Total	Immigrant	98	0.22	0.488	199	-0.258
	Turkish	103	0.24	0.514		

The immigrant and Turkish Students' averages for using substitution component are low and similar to each other. The difference between group averages is not significant ($p>.05$) No problem relating to the use of substitution components was encountered in the student texts. This stems from the fact that substitution components are rarely used in Turkish grammar.

The level of use of conjunctions by immigrant and Turkish students were determined in accordance with the classification produced by Coşkun (2005).

Table 3.
Students' Frequencies of Using Ellipsis

Ellipsis Type	Group	n	X̄	ss	sd	t
Clausal Ellipsis	Immigrant	98	0.18	0.415	190,716	-4,315*
	Turkish	103	0.48	0.540		
Lexical Ellipsis	Immigrant	98	13.28	5.458	199	-3,607*
	Turkish	103	15.84	4.623		
Suffixal Ellipsis	Immigrant	98	0.47	0.677	199	-,071
	Turkish	103	0.48	0.592		
Total	Immigrant	98	13.93	5.538	199	-3.936*
	Turkish	103	16.80	4.778		

* $p < .001$

Table 6.
t Test Results Relating to Students' Frequencies of Using Conjunctions

Conjunction	Group	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	sd	t
Additive	Immigrant	98	6.80	6.295	153.242	-0.453
	Turkish	103	7.13	3.621		
Distinctive	Immigrant	98	0.32	0.652	199	-0.862
	Turkish	103	0.40	0.691		
Contrast	Immigrant	98	1.28	0.906	193.145	-0.176
	Turkish	103	1.30	1.136		
Time Alignment	Immigrant	98	4.62	3.648	150.952	0.187
	Turkish	103	4.54	2.047		
Condition	Immigrant	98	0.50	1.038	199	0.409
	Turkish	103	0.45	0.801		
Explanation	Immigrant	98	0.44	0.659	199	-0.983
	Turkish	103	0.53	0.711		
Sampling	Immigrant	98	0.11	0.348	180.487	-1.490
	Turkish	103	0.20	0.512		
Cause+Effect	Immigrant	98	0.79	2.136	199	-0.159
	Turkish	103	0.83	1.309		
Effect+Cause	Immigrant	98	0.29	0.626	199	-0.608
	Turkish	103	0.34	0.635		
Total	Immigrant	98	15.13	8.263	177.280	-0.571
	Turkish	103	15.72	6.048		

The level of use of conjunctions by immigrant and Turkish students are very similar for all the types. The t tests showed no significant difference between the groups in terms of any individual type of conjunction or of total use ($p > .05$).

Table 7.
Distribution of Problems Identified in Students' Use of Conjunctions

Problem	Immigrant (n= 98)		Turkish (n= 103)		Total (N= 201)	
	f	$\bar{X}$	*f*	$\bar{X}$	*f*	$\bar{X}$
1. Unnecessary use of the conjunction	77	0.79	49	0.48	126	0.63
2. Use of the conjunction that is inappropriate for its meaning and function	52	0.53	8	0.08	60	0.30
Total	129	1.32	57	0.55	186	0.93

According to Table 7, both of the problems relating to the use of conjunctions are more common among the immigrant students. While the frequency of problem is 1.32 per student in the texts written by immigrant students, it is 0.55 among Turkish students.

Table 8.
t Test Results for Students' Frequencies of Using Lexical Cohesion in Student Texts

Group	n	$\bar{X}$	ss	sd	t
Immigrant	98	11.07	3.524	199	-0.377
Turkish	103	11.26	3.635		

According to Table 8, the average lexical cohesion scores of immigrant and Turkish students are very similar. There is no significant difference between the group averages.

Discussion and Conclusions

The research results were evaluated in three respects:

Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

According to the results of the study, no significant difference was found between immigrant and Turkish students in use frequencies of the cohesion devices other than the ellipsis. This can be associated with the immigrant students' intense contact

with the Turkish language, which they learned as a second language from childhood. This is because seeing works of a second language frequently at an early age has an important role in the capability to use the correct grammatical structures in the second language (Taylor & Taylor, 1990; Valdes, 1999).

Linguistics

It is seen in the literature that there are very few studies of the use of cohesion devices in Turkish. Many previous studies (Akçataş, 2001; Altunkaya, 1987; Gültekin, 2000; İşsever, 1995; Subaşı-Uzun, 1995; Ülkü, 1984, 1992) were conducted only as a linguistic study. In these studies, some linguistic concepts were explained via examples from the texts. In some studies relating to education (Karabağ & İşsever, 1995; Keçik, 1992; Ruhi & Kocaman, 1996), very limited results were reached with regard to the use of cohesion devices in Turkish. The most comprehensive previous study on the use of cohesion devices in Turkish was by Coşkun (2005), in which the use of cohesion devices in Turkish was described based on narrative texts written by primary education students.

In the present study, the distribution of the use of cohesion devices in Turkish largely agrees with the results reported by Coşkun (2005). According to the results of this research, it is seen that the ellipsis, which is used in very little English (Bae, 2001; Neuner, 1983; Ramadan 2003; Zarnowski, 1983) is the most common cohesion device in Turkish, and it is a distinctive feature of the Turkish language. Accordingly, this must be taken into consideration in teaching Turkish, particularly in teaching it as a second language or as a foreign language, and a particular place must be allocated to teaching the use of ellipsis in Turkish.

Language Education

Problems with the use of cohesion devices identified in this study indicate that students cannot realize mental continuity in the process of forming a text. Cohesion is an important textuality standard impacting the quality of the text (Ramadan, 2003, p. 24-27). Many previous studies (Bae, 2001; Coşkun, 2005; Karatay, 2010; McLin, 1987; Shi, 1993; Yuen, 1993) reported that there is a positive relationship between cohesion which describing the relationships between small units of the text and coherence which describing the relationships between large units of the text. The problems that students experience in establishing cohesion relationships reduce the text coherence and quality. Previous studies reported a positive relationship between the cohesion level of texts written by students and their skills in understanding and interpreting the texts that they read (Yuen, 1993) and general language competence (Jin, 1998).

Cohesion devices are based on linguistic relationships appearing in the surface structure of a text. In this sense, cohesion is closely interrelated with the teaching of grammar. However, it is inappropriate to consider grammar teaching as an independent field. Grammar education within primary schools must not be based on rule and rote learning, but must focus on the functional use of grammar in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills (Güneş, 2007; Sever, 1997; Tompkins, 1998). When forming a text, the relationships between sentences and paragraphs must be considered before the formal features such as orthography and punctuation, margins, page setup; and the student must be guided in this matter.

In teaching writing skills, the primary role of the teacher must be to develop the students' cognitive skills in order to enable them to focus on a subject, to produce ideas about this subject, to develop these ideas and to establish relationships between these ideas. In this sense, the cohesion problems identified in this study must be taken into consideration in written exercises and classroom activities must be developed that address these problems. In these activities, students must be taught the cohesion problems present in their written texts. When teaching Turkish as a foreign language or as a second language, particular emphasis must be given to teaching the use of ellipsis.

Based on the results of the present study, the following suggestions can be made for future research: *(i)* Similar studies could be conducted on students of different age groups learning Turkish as a foreign language. *(ii)*An education program can be prepared to address problems related to the use of cohesion devices; an experimental study could compare the progress of students within this program with that of students not receiving this education in the use of cohesion devices. *(iii)* Studies could be conducted on the role of the use of cohesion devices in students' progress in reading.

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