

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Pieces of Life is an anthology of short stories written by the 2008 students of Creative Writing class in the English Department of Maranatha Christian University. It contains thirty-one short stories, divided into five different topics. So far, this anthology is the first written by the students; therefore, it is understandable that the language of the short stories is imperfect. The short stories in the anthology are written to demonstrate the students' skills in creative writing. Seen from the numerous grammatical mistakes in most of the stories, the writers cannot be said to have an advanced level of English writing skill. Nevertheless, there are some who show sufficient knowledge of English grammar.

In order to write a good short story, the writers are supposed to have sufficient English writing skills, including the skill of showing cohesion in their text. According to Halliday and Hassan, cohesion is "a semantic relation between an element in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it" (8).

The single instance of cohesion in a text is indicated by a cohesive tie which shows “one occurrence of a pair of cohesively related items” (3). Moreover, the cohesive tie, which is the cohesive relation that exists between the presupposed and the presupposing elements in the text, provides the texture of the text (Halliday & Hassan 2).

Considering that cohesive ties are very important in creating a unity or coherence of a text, I am interested in investigating the cohesive ties in the texts; besides, I myself was a member of this Creative Writing class. I also noticed that the course had put emphasis on finding and developing ideas but it did not give any knowledge about how to present the ideas appropriately. This course did not give any explanation about how to build a good paragraph that would form an appropriate text containing a main idea and its supporting sentences. In fact, some of the short stories contain sentences that are not related to each other and do not support the main idea of each paragraph. In theory, a text is a unit of meaning that should be realized by sentences that are related to each other (Halliday & Hassan 2).

The theories given in this class were mainly literary; there were no theories on cohesion and coherence, the two elements that are very important to construct a proper text. Thus, the purpose of doing this study is to demonstrate that the texts investigated have not fulfilled the requirements of a cohesive text. This study suggests that students who are going to take Creative Writing class should have mastered the appropriate use of cohesive ties in writing a text.

The theories that I use to analyze the data are taken from Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hassan’s. They distinguish five types of cohesive ties:

(a) substitution, which is the replacement of a word (group) or sentence segment by a “dummy” word (88); (b) ellipsis, the omission of a word or part of a sentence, which is closely related to substitution, and can be classified as “substitution by zero” (88); (c) reference, which concerns the specific nature of the information that is signaled for retrieval (31); (d) conjunction, the relationship that indicates how the subsequent sentences or clauses should be linked (226); and (e) lexical cohesion, which refers to the link between the content words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs) which are used in subsequent segments of discourse (274).

No students of the English Department in Maranatha Christian University have ever chosen to solely study cohesive ties. This fact has been my first motivation in choosing this topic. The second motivation is that cohesive ties are essential in writing. Therefore, I decide to study the cohesive ties in the texts written by the students of Creative Writing class in 2008.

The original data, which are the students’ texts, have significant grammatical mistakes, although these written texts already have the elements of a paragraph, such as a topic sentence and supporting sentences. Therefore, to analyze the texts, I am going to mention the cohesive ties that are used in the data, show how the cohesive ties create the texture in the opening paragraph of the texts, and give my suggestions to improve the text cohesion of the data.

This study is significant to show the students’ weaknesses in using cohesive ties when they write a short story so that future students can use the knowledge to produce more readable short stories that are supported by appropriate use of cohesive ties.

(786 words)

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the background previously presented, the research problems are formulated as follows:

1. What cohesive ties are used to achieve text cohesion in the data?
2. How do the cohesive ties create the texture in opening paragraph of the texts?
3. How can the text cohesion of the data be improved?

1.3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Based on the statements of the problem, the purposes of this study are presented as follows:

1. To identify the cohesive ties that are used to achieve text cohesion in the data.
2. To show how the cohesive ties create the texture in the opening paragraph of the texts.
3. To give suggestions in order to improve the text cohesion of the data.

1.4. METHODS OF RESEARCH

The data I use in this thesis are taken from the opening paragraph of four short stories in Pieces of Life, an anthology of short stories written by the students of Creative Writing class in 2008. The research data, which consists of four opening paragraphs, are selected based on their relatively similar word number.

Of all the short stories, there are four that have the opening paragraph containing 90 - 150 words. Despite many grammatical mistakes in the data, it can be seen that each of Data I, II, III, and IV still has some cohesive ties. Therefore, the research data can still be analyzed without grammatical revision. Then, after identifying the kinds of cohesive ties in the analysis, this study discusses how the cohesive ties create texture in the texts. Finally, the study suggests one of the possible ways to improve the text cohesion of the data.

1.5. ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Methods of Research, and Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two contains the theoretical framework, which will be used to analyze the data. Chapter Three presents the data analysis and the findings. Chapter Four, as the conclusion, includes some comments on the findings. At the end of this thesis, there are the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the data of this study.