REFERENCE ITEMS

IN

AGRICULTURAL ARTICLES

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to

the Faculty of Languages, University of Malaya

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of English As A Second Language

Faculty of Languages and Linguistics

University of Malaya

Kuala Lumpur

1997.
ABSTRACT

The present study is a qualitative analysis of reference items in six agricultural texts of the factual genre with a heuristic or descriptive objective. It identifies patterns and relationships among reference items, and determines their contribution to cohesion. Halliday’s and Hasan’s principles are applied to identify cohesive reference items and to calculate their percentage occurrence in each text.

The findings suggest that the major flaw in Halliday-Hasan’s principles (1976) on reference items lies in their rejection of reference WITHIN the sentence. This weakness is explained by Martin’s reference chains (1992), which indicate that reference items can retrieve information through forward as well as backward reference in the SAME sentence, thereby denoting that the percentage values of cohesive items would be considerably higher if this aspect had been considered in Halliday-Hasan’s method.

The factual genre [and especially the agricultural field] was chosen for this study because of the relatively limited amount of research done on it.

It is hoped that the insights gained from this study may help learners, teachers and researchers of English as a Second Language, who are specializing in a scientific discipline at secondary and tertiary level.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to all parties, directly or indirectly, involved in this research. I am especially grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Azirah Hashim, whose invaluable advice and guidance regarding content and approach enabled the successful completion of the study. My debt also to Dr. Eric Wong who first introduced my group to systemic linguistics.

In addition, I would like to extend my thanks to all friends, colleagues and family members concerned, through whose help, encouragement and constant nagging, I have managed to complete my analysis before schedule.

Last but not least, my deepest appreciation goes to my husband and children for their love and moral support, not to mention their patience and fortitude, during the whole duration of my course and research. An especial note of thanks to my son, Arvind, who was a wonderful mine of knowledge regarding the computer, and who was always rescuing me from its hostile behaviour. I therefore dedicate this book to my husband and children.
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